

COUNTRY HOUSES.

But how the subject theme may gang,
Let time and chance determine ;
Perhaps it may turn out a sang,
Or probably a sermon.

Burns.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.
1832.

F. HINSLEY, PRINTER, ANDOVER.



CHAPTER XII.

As much of the duty of the toilette was to be dispensed with on the day of the play, as the ladies were to change their dresses immediately after dinner for their theatrical costume; Emma therefore ventured, when she reached her room, to throw herself into a chair, and think over her conduct for the last hour, and consider what it ought to be for the two next; but in the multitude of recollections that rushed on her mind, she could decide on nothing beyond behaving cool to Lord John; she had scarcely fortified herself in this resolution, and without considering how she was to practise it, the most important point, when the maid who usually attended her, came to say that dinner was serving up.

Though Emma had worked herself, as she fancied, into a most heroic state of mind, she had not by so doing, quieted her nerves, and between hurry and agitation, she trembled so she could not put in a pin; the maid could not help saying,

“ Dear Miss Legh, don’t flurry yourself so, you will not be fit to go down at all; do let me get you a little of my lady’s camphor, that will do you good !”

Emma felt that camphor would do nothing for her, and therefore refused the offer; she had repeatedly said to herself, if he meant nothing he was going too far, her own heart told her so; if he was serious—but, no, that could not be—his rank—his connexions—his want of fortune, were all against that idea—Lady Tintern’s caution—all—all told her she must not “ lay that flattering unction” to her heart.

But though after this reflection her resolution was taken respecting Lord John, we must do her the justice to say, no one’s mind was freer from any spark of coquetry. And yet people do, or appear to do, perhaps are compelled by circumstances to do, the very thing they would have avoided but for those unexpected circumstances.

Emma, with as tranquil a manner as she could assume, hurried down stairs, and in the hall, coming from an opposite direction, she met Mr. Duprée, who exclaimed :—

“ I am wicked enough to be glad I am not the only defaulter, and I shall shelter myself under your protection at dinner, Miss Legh, and offered his arm, which Emma accepted, saying :—

“ It would be better for me to put myself under your's.”

As they entered, Lord John's eyes were fixed on the door, and his countenance changed to a gloomy scowl; Emma saw this, but screwed her mind up to bear it, she wished things to come to a decision, and yet, she more than any thing, *dreaded* that decision.

As she and Mr. Duprée seated themselves, Lord Tintern said :—

“ What have you been doing together, that you are both so late ? I suspect you have been running races with my children, by Miss Legh's beautiful colour ; if so, I must forgive your not being in soup time, as I know you must have made your little friends so happy ;” neither contradicted or affirmed this statement.

Mr. Duprée only said, “we are not going to be catechised, are we, Miss Legh? nor whatever mischief either of us may have done, is it at all certain it has been a *joint* concern.”

This relieved Emma, who tried to carry it off gaily, as she felt she had a champion in her next neighbour, who had always been remarkably good humoured to her.

Lady Anne, always the heroine of her own tale, was, when Emma and Mr. Duprée first came in, so occupied by recounting an adventure she had had with the Gnu and the Giraff, she did not at first observe them, but her tale ended, she soon remarked that Miss Legh had changed her *attentif*, and turning to Lord John, who was near her, exclaimed,

“Good heavens! what has happened to you? have you been taking lunar caustic or Prussic acid? I protest you are turned green! bright grass green!!”

“I am much flattered,” he returned, “by the notice your ladyship honours me with, but I assure you I am perfectly well, and have not the least inclination, or intention to poison myself.”

Well then, I am sure something must ail my eyes,

I must be going blind, for to me, your very eyes look green ; oh, you are quite a green-eyed monster."

"Thank you, a thousand times, for the kind compliment."

Which Lord John now fully understood, nor was Emma, who sat opposite, dull in comprehending the drift of it, but *she* was not doomed to escape, for, addressing her, Lady Anne said,

"What did you do to Lord John in your walk, Miss Legh ? I dare say you are the guilty person ; was there no river for *you* to drag him in, or out of ?"

"Oh," said Mrs. De Cameron, "something that, with a little poetic licence, might be swelled into a river, though, I believe, Miss Legh passed through it without wetting the sole of her shoe."

"I dare say," said Lady Anne, "it was a charming little adventure, in which Lord John and Miss Legh were Celedon and Amelia."

Lord John looked contemptuously angry, and said,

"I have no doubt, whatever it was, or however trifling, Mrs. De Cameron's genius will make an epic poem of it."

There are some occasions when the nerves are

- worked up to so high a pitch of excitement, that it is the turn of a straw whether the person so affected laughs or cries. Emma was exactly at that point, she felt the force of both sarcasms, but luckily also, she did not feel forlorn; Mr. Duprée seemed in some degree implicated in them, and he was able to defend both her and himself, so the scale turned on the laughing side, though her laugh was almost hysterical, yet still it was a laugh, and one that touched Lord John to the quick.

“That girl’s a thorough coquette,” said he to himself, “like the rest of her sex. I thought her above that, but I’ll care no more about her.”

When Lady Anne had exhausted her raillery, she said,

Apropos to nothing. When are we to have your love letters Fitz? I am dying to see them—do Lord Tintern interfere, for that wretch is determined to make money of them, and will keep them all to himself is that fair? have we not all that are assembled here a right to share the *treasure-trove*, and enjoy the originals?”

“I have,” said Lord Tintern, resigned them en

turely to Fitz-Gibbon, and I shall not interfere; you must use your influence, which is all powerful over him—but he declared they were the most romantic unintelligible things that could possibly be imagined.

“Oh, never mind their unintelligibleness, so much the better, the more mystery the more interest.

“But I can find no mystery in them, said Mr. Fitz-Gibbon, “there is no story belonging to them that I can discern; they are only the tenderest effusions of *La belle passion*—the lady grows jealous, and I should suspect of a powerful rival—perhaps Queen Elizabeth herself, and in a fit of generosity, resigns her lover, that he may push his fortune at court.”

“Oh, charming! that is quite a new view of things, do let us have it.”

“Perhaps,” said Mr. Fitz-Gibbon, “if Lord Tintern would let a little farther search be made, we might find some more papers to elucidate the matter.”

“I cannot promise,” replied Lord Tintern, “to have the wainscoting of that room taken down, and nothing else would answer the purpose; as it is, perhaps, the owner of the house will not thank me for the liberty I have already taken with his house, in turning

part of it into a play-house — nor, indeed, am I certain that I ought not to have kept these letters for him.”

“Oh,” cried Lady Anne, “how crabbed you are growing, Lord Tintern, but do promise me upon your honour, that when the scenes are taken down, you will have as much search as can be made without damage, and you, my most amiable Fitz, promise also, to let us see at breakfast to-morrow, all that you have decyphered.” This was readily assented to.

When the cloth was removed, Lord Tintern said, “We must all be old fashioned, and drink success to our theatricals to-night, in Champagne.”

The ladies hurried their coffee, and retired to dress for the performance, so that Emma and Lord John only met again in the Green-room, where he evidently avoided her.

What we most ardently desire, or fancy we desire, does not often bring, when it arrives, either the comfort or pleasure we expected. This was Emma’s case, she thought if she could get rid of Lord John’s attentions she should be *quite* happy, she had by an effort of her own, evidently offended him, and now *that* dis-

tressed her, she felt as if she was so ungrateful, after all his attention to her ; and she feared she had made him jealous, that was the last thing she intended to do, he must, at any rate, think her capricious.

These thoughts passed in her mind whilst she was dressing, but she had worked herself up to a state of excitement, and one thing was lucky, the character she had to play was one of disdain towards *him*, there would be nothing in it to awaken any softer sentiments.

In playing his part he affected an indifference that almost spoilt it—he was evidently in a very ill humour—but the performance went very fairly on till the twelfth scene, when the Count, as Marquis de Mascaille, danced a *pas-seul*, and forgetting his own dimensions, and the smallness of the theatre, as he advanced to take the hand of Madelon, he extended his other hand so as to strike the side scene, which tottered for an instant, and then fell !

Lord John was on one side waiting the proper moment to come on and chastise the pretended Marquis ; and Mr. Duprée was on the other side of the stage, both of them saw the impending catastrophe, Mr.

Duprée easily drew Lady Tintern out of the way—but if Lord John had not rushed on the stage, caught Emma in his arms, and carried her off, the whole side scene must have fallen on her, it was the work of an instant, but he was not quick enough entirely to escape himself, for the edge of the scene struck his shoulder with such force, as made him stagger under his burthen, but he did not relinquish it, till he had seated her safely on a sopha in the green-room, adjoining.

Emma was so surprized that she hardly comprehended what had happened, though she felt the shock Lord John had sustained whilst he was carrying her, and seeing by the excessive paleness of his countenance that he must be hurt, clasping her hands, exclaimed,

Oh, my Lord, you must be hurt!!! dreadfully hurt! how can I be grateful enough to you for saving me; or how can I express my distress at your sufferings!

Emma's feeling were greatly excited, she was off her guard, and expressed the genuine dictates of her heart, and with an energy of manner he had never seen in her before he was proportionally gratified, and replied,

“ I am richly rewarded if I have saved *you* from harm, and entitled myself to a shadow of gratitude, but this I fear I do not deserve.”

“ Oh ! my Lord ! cried Emma, bursting into tears, which her already exhausted spirits could not repress, how shall I forgive myself, if I have been the occasion of any injury to you !”

“ You are quite innocent of *this* injury,” he replied, putting his hand on his right shoulder, “ the injury you have done has not been so involuntary, at least I hope so, and it is on the *other side*.”

The tone in which this was said, touched Emma to the quick, and made her feel Lord John was not indifferent to her, and that the part she was attempting to act was almost beyond her powers ; and yet she must persevere in it, she felt it was right, it was what she owed herself, so repressing her tears, and subduing her feelings, she only said,

“ My Lord, have some advice and assistance ; have something done.”

“ Nothing can be done,” he replied, “ half so soothing as your pity, one of those precious tears ! could I hope *I* had excited *it* ! could I believe they

have not been *wholly* occasioned by alarm at the accident, but compassion for me, and taking her hand, I trust you are not hurt. May I hope you have forgiven my inadvertant offences, whatever they were, of this morning."

Luckily for Emma, before she could reply to this appeal Lady Tintern's voice announced her near approach. Lord John dropped the hand he held, but he did not relinquish it before Emma felt that the fingers of the one hurt were entirely useless ;

Was there ever, exclaimed Lady Tintern, "any thing half so provoking as this ! have not I always said those scenes were placed too close—but ! My dear Miss Legh, are you hurt ? you look so frightened !

"Oh, Ma'am, I am not in the least hurt—but I fear Lord John is seriously so, and in rescuing *me* he has got this injury ! Oh dear Lady Tintern persuade him to have something done ! to have a surgeon sent for !"

"Oh by all means !" she replied, but evidently more occupied by the consequences to the performance, and rather impatiently said, "are you really

hurt? and what shall we do if you are. I have ordered the scene to be replaced; the drop scene is down, but that crab Fitz-Gibbon would not sing one of his comic songs to put the people in good humour; however the Count has undertaken that, and I hope he will be ridiculous enough to amuse the audience."

Lord John was walking up and down the room, with the hasty step that betrayed extreme suffering—he intreated haste might be made to resume the performance, he was quite able to go through his part. Mr. Duprée, who was a cooler judge than any one of the party, urged this also, seeing that Lord John was determined to have nothing done till the play was over, and therefore in a very few minutes all was declared ready for the renewal of the performance.

The audience in general had not been aware that any one was hurt, not even Lord Tintern suspected it; he had only therefore attended to the replacing the scene, and making it secure from any future accident.

The Count began his *pas-seul* again, but with more caution, and less effect; and when he again took the hand of Madelon, Lord John and Mr. Duprée entered, the former much more like a spectre than a living

being, though the energy with which he drove the pretended Marquis de Mascaille off the stage, was almost outré; but it was the effect of pain, almost of agony—giving one tender look at Emma, he followed his disguised valet, and calling immediately for his real one, desired him to find out if there was a surgeon near, and send for him, and then follow him to his room.

When the play was concluded, a new dilemma awaited Lady Tintern, for Mr. Duprée assured her, it would be impossible for Lord John to perform his parts in the farce, for he was seriously hurt.

What was she to do? it was quite despair! sure never any one was so unlucky as herself! every body and every thing conspired against her, and against her play! and at that moment it darted into her mind, perhaps Mrs. De Cameron was not perfectly innocent of the fall of the scene; she had contrived wonderfully to escape herself, though she was nearest to it; perhaps it was a little spite, she was quite capable of it,—was provoked, and did not like her part; but this thought only passed like a shadow across Lady Tintern's mind; she had a more important point to

attend to, how she was to find a substitute ! she might have had recourse to Mr. *Everard Price*, he was always ready for any thing, but Lady Tintern disliked him and his pretensions so much, she had rather it should be any one else. She applied to her late resource, Mr. Fermor, he assured her that Mr. Nixon, assistant surgeon to the Coldstream Guards was the man for her, he had often done Sneer, and could perform Don Whiskerandos as an impromptu ; but though he certainly had been there, and been invited in case of accidents, he was not forthcoming now, being employed on one not anticipated, he was attending Lord John professionally.

The interval between the play and the farce was prolonged as much as possible by refreshments, to give time for his return from his patient, and to enquiries after him, he answered

“ That he was more hurt than at first apprehended, but not dangerously so.”

What had become of poor Emma ! she had retired to her room, there to indulge her tears which she found it impossible to restrain. Lady Tintern had no time to attend her, it was sufficient that she was not hurt ;

but Madame Gevois, who had been behind the scenes, very good naturedly followed, and did all she could to console her, and advised her to go down again and make one of the audience; this was the best advice that could be given, though the person who gave it, was not at all aware of the reason that made it so good. Emma felt most disposed to remain where she was and weep, but even the presence of Madame Gevois made her ashamed to do that.

There are some occasions where reflection is so bitter, we are afraid to indulge it, and there are others when it is so gratifying we feel we *ought* not to give way to it; in both these circumstances was Emma, but what made her decide on going down was, the anxious wish to know if her champion was much hurt; intelligence which she could not obtain in her own apartment, so driving away reflections, sweet or bitter, till a more convenient season, she returned to the theatre, and as she had no part in the farce, she placed herself amongst the children, anxious not to attract notice.

The Critic went off better than the play, many of the performers were more at home, some omissions, and curtailment were of necessity made, but altogether it "connected very well."

We have heard it asserted by our friends who have joined in private theatricals, that the most enjoyable part of the business to the actors, is the supper after the performance, when all the failures and distresses are laughed at. But this was far from being the case in the present instance, there had been rather too much discomfort, at least, Lady Tintern thought so, to laugh at.

Lord John's accident, Lord Tintern said, at supper, was a very serious one; Mr. Nixon thought the shoulder bone was broke, but it was so swelled before he was called in, that he could give no decided opinion. — Lady Tintern thought every thing was against her, she had attempted, and intended to have something unique and super-excellent,—it had failed—she felt it had—her play was inferior to those at **** and **** and if it was to be followed by a long illness of Lord John's when she wanted to get away from Stoke Park, and forget, and make others forget it also, it would be intolerable; but if he was ill, he might have the house to himself, she could not be out of town when Easter was over, and London was filling.

Lady Tintern was not the only disappointed per-

son, the Count discerned that Lady Anne had only made him a laughing stock, and Mrs. De Cameron had made herself of no importance to any one, and her ill humour was excessive, but we must leave them all to sleep it off, and follow Emma.

Notwithstanding Lady Tintern's disappointment, most of the audience had been highly gratified; such amusements are thinly scattered in the country, and therefore less fastidiously received; and they pressed and intreated for another performance, but Lady Tintern would not hear of it, it was quite impossible enquiring of her lord if the accident to Lord John would be likely to detain him long at Stoke Park, she was gratified by hearing that he was so anxious to get to town, he only waited for post horses; but Lord John had desired this might not be mentioned to any one but herself. Mr. Nixon was to accompany him, and resign him into other professional hands.

Emma had not heard this last piece of intelligence when she retired to her room. With what joy did she dismiss her attendant, fasten her door, that she might not return, and give herself up—to herself—to her reflections, pleasing and painful,—she could now freely

indulge her tears, and burying her face in the pillow of her sofa, gave vent to them till they relieved the feelings of her over-fraught heart, feelings that had almost 'bid it break.'

It is one of the blessings of youth, and one that often departs with youth, that their easily excited tears seldom fail of bringing relief and consolation. When Emma's mind had become calmer, she was better able to think over all the transactions of this eventful day, the most eventful of any in her past life. Lord John had unequivocally declared his happiness depended on her favour, but he made her no offer! what did his admiration *mean*? did it mean nothing more than to gain her affections and then desert her? she had heard of such things, and Lady Tintern's cautions were directed to that point, and yet his conduct during the walk, all the tender things he said whilst they were seated on the tomb-stone, his jealousy at her avoiding him during the walk home, and his behaviour at dinner, could *that* mean *nothing*? certainly she could not believe that she was *indifferent* to him, and then when he saw her in danger, he forgot and forgave, and rescued her at his own hazard and injury—was not this *love*? what else could

it be ? but how would it end ? aye, ‘there was the rub !’ that was the question Emma did not dare to ask, or rather to answer, Lady Tintern’s repeated assurances that Lord John meant nothing—could mean nothing ! came like a cold key across her heart.

People in love, and Emma was in love, though she did not know it, never reason, their reason is asleep, they only *feel*, neither can they calculate, or Emma might have recollected, for she knew it, that her father was rich enough to tempt a needy lord to ally himself to his daughter ; but though this did not occur to her, yet with the sanguine feeling of her age, she resolved to see things in their most favourable light.

She knew not the worst of the accident, and with the hope of seeing Lord John at breakfast next day, and judging then, from less excited feelings, she composed herself as well as she could to rest ; but her slumbers were not “light,” or her “dreams pleasing,” the events of the day made a sad jumble of joys and sorrows, and she hailed the morning with delight. On asking her attendant if she knew how Lord John Leslie did, she was answered,

“That he left the house before day-break, and was one to London.”

What pain those few words were fraught with, we leave our readers to judge ! We might bring a world of comparisons, card houses carefully built, and blown down with a breath, bubbles dissolved in air, imaginary castles vanishing, all these united are nothing to what a young, tender, and inexperienced heart feels on its first disappointment ; nothing in after life, though its consequences may be more severe, can at all equal this in poignancy ! but Emma felt not its full force yet, hope lingered,

‘ Hope thou dear deceiver,’

she might at breakfast hear something more, but she only learnt a confirmation of her maid’s information ; and, with less feelings of regret than she would otherwise have experienced, she read a letter Lord Tintern gave her, from her father, informing her he should be with her soon after breakfast, and directing her to prepare to return home ; this arrangement had been made by Lord Tintern when he gave Mr. Legh an invitation to the play. Mrs. De Cameron was ill naturedly disposed to rally Emma on her wounded knight, so that she was glad to make her escape.

Her father soon after arrived, and having some business to transact with Lord Tintern, gave his daugh-

ter time to arrange her packages, and take leave of her little friends in the school-room ; when she did so of Lady Tintern she said many kind things to her, and hoped Mr. Legh would again trust her with her young friend ; he, of course, expressed his own and his daughter's gratitude for the kindness she had received, and the honour done him.

The carriages of the other guests were packing, and Emma made her way through cap-boxes, trunks and imperials to the old post chaise that was to convey her from a scene that might tincture her after life.

To those not used to visit from house to house till they acquire a restless habit of thinking all places dull at the end of three days ; to those who feel *present* enjoyments as the young do, with a fearful presentiment they may never come over again, the seeing such a party break up is melancholy. With a heavy heart, and a tearful eye Emma made her way through the busy servants, saying to herself, all is over ! this will never be again !

It is very certain that bodily pain is often valuable mental discipline. On his way to town Lord John had no inclination to talk, and indeed his medical attendant

had forbid it—but if his tongue was silent, his mind was busy—he thought over the last week, what had he been doing? if the question had been answered fairly, it would have been, ‘indulging my vanity at the expense of a very interesting young woman,’ but such was not Lord John’s version of the thing, only making a little love to a pretty simple school girl who hardly knew what it meant—if it had not been for this confounded accident, I think, I could in two days more have made those cherry lips *own* that I was an irresistible fellow, that would have been the zest! it was after all only a little harmless flirtation, a lesson for the girl to practise upon some rustic squire—she might pine a little—he rather hoped she would, or he should not have made the impression he intended—it would be mortifying to think he had not touched her heart. No! no, he knew he was an acknowledged lady killer; but another consideration forced itself on him, might he not, by going on a little longer, have got into a scrape; Lady Tintern was a sharp woman he knew, she had watched him, and the girl’s old father, he believed she had one, might have been troublesome, and a still farther consideration came across him which he hardly

dare whisper to his own heart—was he not, in trying to inspire a passion in another, encouraging one in his own breast? Oh! no! he was case-hardened in a panoply of steel—and yet certain little twinges told him that was not exactly the case, or why was he jealous and angry at her apparent, though accidental, preference of another; the girl was really a captivating creature, it was her simplicity, her ignorance, her freshness, that constituted the charm, but she was plebeian. Oh, it was not to be thought of seriously! If her old father, who was said to be rich, would die, the thing might not be so bad. The devil take rich heiresses in general, they were as ugly as sin, and as infernally capricious as Lady Anne. Could he, by any magic, have transformed Emma Legh into Lady Anne Lawton! But, as things were, it might be all as well as it was—only his shoulder was devilish painful—he thought he might have got off easier.

These reflections carried him to town, there to plunge into its dissipation, and go on in the same heartless career with some other unfortunate young woman, and he comforted himself that his arm, in a sling, would make him the more interesting, especially when it was known to have been acquired in rescuing a fair lady.

Oh, how heartless, how selfish, is the system of the present day ! how calculated to destroy the best feelings, the dearest and most valuable affections of the human heart ! those from which all the social duties spring ; all the tender links that bear us through the severe and painful struggles of domestic duties ; those feelings which make a beloved object dearer than life itself !

Under this system, this refined code of honour, or rather dishonour, men allow themselves to go every length in *gaining* a heart they mean to *desert* the moment they have gained it : the pursuit is the pleasure ; the difficulty makes the zest ; the unfortunate young woman is left to break her heart, and her false lover gains the distinguishing title of a lady-killer.

“ It was not so when we were young.

‘ Love then was honest genuine passion,
And manly gallantry the fashion.’

Nor is the evil confined to one sex ; those who have been disappointed, are tempted to make reprisals. Marriage, which ought to be the result of affection, united to discretion is now become a sort of *ruse de guerre*. Establishment-hunting young women en-

courage those they do not mean to accept, in order to excite to a proposal from those they wish to draw into their net ; this conduct is only the least guilty of the two, inasmuch as the feelings of men are less acute : on such occasions, *they* drown their disappointments in wine, or in the more vicious excitement of a gaming table. But a woman pines herself to death, or rushes, from pique, into a detested marriage, and is *wretched for life*. As we only took up our pen with the intention of describing a country house, and a party assembled to be amused and to be disappointed, we might now take leave of our readers, did we not flatter ourselves that we had raised in their bosoms some interest for our little favourite Emma Legh, and inspired them with a wish to know how she bore her bitter disappointment : we shall therefore trespass, for a few more pages, on the patience they have so kindly bestowed on us.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN seated in the carriage, Mr. Legh took Emma's hand, and, shaking it heartily, said,

“Well, my dear little girl, I am glad to get you back again; your old father has missed you sadly, but he has comforted himself that you have been happy!”

This was too much for Emma; she burst into violent flood of tears, which surprized her father, but he added,

“Well! well! I don't wonder you are sorry to leave such a gay party, and I don't love you the less for a few tears of gratitude.”

Alas! they were the bitter tears of disappointment! However, Emma dried them up as soon as she was

able, and, with the most cheerful air she could command, answered all her father's questions, which were not very minute as to who was there, none of whom he knew, even by name. He asked also, after the amusements, which were as little within his comprehension.

“Aye ! aye ! Emma, they are fine folks, and to their misfortune, have nothing to do ; so they try to make something out of nothing ; poor work in my mind.”

Emma, in her turn, enquired after her flowers, her pets, and above all, her friends the Grahams ; of whom Mr. Legh could tell her nothing ; for he had not seen them since she had been from home ; but she might ride over as soon as she pleased, and enquire after them, and tell them all she had seen and heard. But this was not what she wished to do, though she thanked her father for the proposal. She must get her heart and its feelings under more control before she could submit them to Mrs. Grahams's scrutiny ; in her present state she would detect the whole at a glance.

Arrived at home, Emma tried to busy herself with her garden, her birds, and all her former amusements, but, alas, they were no longer sources of pleasure ; she looked after them more because she felt it was a duty,

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not to suffer herself to be listless and unemployed, in short, not to be able to *think*.

A few days after Emma's return home, her father announced to her his intention of having a few friends to dinner, a thing of not very frequent occurrence, saying,

"Put on your best looks, and your smartest gown, for there will be some beaux for you," giving her a pat on the cheek, and rather a significant look, adding "James Martin will be one."

Emma too well understood this intimation, colouring, and with a look of contempt, she turned from her father that he might not observe it.

James Martin was the son of an opulent landholder, who had made his money in some trade, but having given his son what he called the *best of education*, by putting him to a sort of half public school, at Reading, and bringing him up to no profession, fancied he was making a gentleman of him. There was no harm in the young man, and Emma had not disliked him, nor his attentions to her, till she had seen those of more refinement, and of more elegant manners. He was rather pert, and very vulgar, talked *slang*, and affected to know something of all sporting men; though perhaps his information came from some horse-dealer, or

innkeeper; he kept a hunter, and, though he was shunned by the gentlemen of the hunt, as one who wanted to intrude himself among them, he, notwithstanding, picked up something at the cover-side, which he passed off amongst those of his own class, as the opinion of my Lord Leapditch, or Sir Harry Fivebar; thought himself a *fashionable* man, because some second rate tailor or boot-maker, had assured him his surtout, and his Wellingtons, were made after the exact pattern of my Lord Petersham's. But he had some good qualities, and Mr. Legh, though he sometimes joked him, on being what he called, "a buck of the first water," would nevertheless have had no objection to him as a son-in-law, "it being provided" that Emma had no objection.

Days we dread always come too soon; Emma thought Wednesday could only have been Monday, but the usual dinner company preparation told her she was mistaken. Her father, with his men friends, always asked a married lady as a support and chaperone to Emma; on this occasion he had invited, with her husband, the apothecary, Mrs. Jackson. She was the daughter of a great linen-draper, in Bond-street, was one of four pretty daughters, whom he married off as

fast as he could:—she played the London lady, at Hatchcomb. Mr. Jackson's business was likely to keep him beyond the dinner hour, and Mr. Legh was punctuality itself, so he sent his wife, and begged they would sit down to table: they did so, and he soon joined them.

“Well, Miss Emma,” said he, “so you have been playing truant, and something else, too, I hear; how did you get on with all those lords and ladies? devilish proud some of them—you had the old Earl of Downham and his daughter, hadn't you?”

“And some blades of fashion,” said Mr. James Martin, “I wonder if you had any of the steeple chacers?”

Emma did not know.

Other subjects, more congenial to most of the company, occupied the dinner. When Mrs. Jackson returned to the drawing-room,

“Well, now, Emma,” said she, “do tell me a little about fashions; I want a new spring bonnet, and something of a dinner cap or hat, I have desired sister Sophy to look about her at the Soho Bazaar, or the Western Exchange, for any thing pretty, and quite in the newest taste; but you can tell me what sort of

things they ought to be, and I do assure you, my dear, if you want any thing of the kind, only describe it to me, and Sophy will get it for you as good, and for one third of the price you would give at those fine French milliners."

Emma was not in want of any thing, nor could she describe what they ought to be.

"Bless me! I have not brought my *Bell Assembly*, I meant to ask you which of the *costumes* you would advise me to follow, but I dare say^d you would let your servant step to my house for it."

"Certainly," and the bell was rung and answered.

"Do, Joseph," said Mrs. Jackson, "be so good as just to step over to our house, and ask Susan for a book with a yellow paper cover on the table in the drawing-room, it has ladies' dresses in it, I dare say she has had the curiosity to look in it; stay, there is a medical magazine of Jackson's, that is not it, what I want is *La Bell Assembly*, you'll remember the title, be sure!"

Whilst he was gone, Emma said she feared she should not be able to give her much information.

"Not know what is the fashion, my dear, when you have been living amongst the F—'s and the Q's?"

Emma could not guess who were meant by these initials.

“Oh, dear! the *Fashionables* and the *Quality*, to be sure! that’s what we used always to call them in Bond Street.”

When the book was brought, Emma could not decide on any dress as exactly like what she had seen.

“That is extraordinary! past comprehension! but you must have heard those fine ladies talk of French fashions and dress?”

“Never! excepting what we were to act our parts in, dresses of character, they were discussed, to be sure; but they were not modern dresses, or what you would call fashionable, they were only appropriate to those we represented.”

“But was not Lady Anne Lawton there?”

“Certainly.”

“And how did she dress?”

“Like the others, and like most people, I cannot give you any particulars.”

“Why, my dear Emma, you have grown blind, or stupid since I saw you last!”

This was far from being the case, but Emma felt so strongly the difference between the society she had

lately left, and that she was now doomed to endure ; and knew how Mrs. Jackson went talking from house to house, that her own natural good sense and tact made her determine to give her no food for conversation out of Stoke Park.

“ Well, but if you did not talk of dress, what did you ladies talk about ? ”

“ I really can’t exactly tell, I don’t think we did talk much together, it was general conversation.”

“ What did you do when you were all together ? ”

“ Worked, or read, or had music.”

“ Dear, how odd, reading in company ! Have you seen any new book of poetry ? but I shall never meet with any I doat on as I do on *Lalla Rookha*, and Lord Byron’s *Don Juan*.”

Emma started at this last declaration, she had been cautioned by Lady Tintern not to look into *Don Juan*, though, in consequence of Lord John Leslie having lately been in Greece, and able to refer to the scenes which Lord Byron had so exquisitely described in his works, particularly *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan*, ma Em had heard more about them than she would otherwise have done—criticisms on their beauties or defects.

“Do tell me what is the last new novel?”

There were so many new-looking books of that sort, Emma could not tell which was the last, she did not read any of them.

“What other books or magazines?”

“Oh, every sort, the tables were covered with them, and the shelves of the library with older and more established works, the gentlemen read or referred to them, but Emma had no time.”

“Ah, well, I suppose your time was taken up learning your part, as it was in French; but is it true that Lady Tintern’s children cannot talk a word of English?”

“Not exactly,” replied Emma, “they generally speak French or German with their governess, but I believe, indeed I am sure, they can talk English.”

“It is my amazement how children can be brought to learn any language but their own; I am sure it is trouble enough to teach them that, at least *I* find it so.”

Emma was not sorry that tea, and the arrival of the gentlemen, put a stop to these interrogations.

Mr. James Martin, as he entered, looked at his legs, and his shoe-strings, adjusted his collar and cravat, pulled down his wristbands, touched up his hair; in

short, made up his outer man for "the ladies," and, with an air of perfect satisfaction, at his own appointments and appearance, placed himself with his back to the fire, which he entirely occupied.

Mr. Jackson, taking out his spectacles, came up to Emma, saying,

"Now, Miss Emma, let me look at you, you know I am a privileged person, *I* may always look at young ladies through my spectacles, and find out all their defects."

Emma disliked, and coloured at, this scrutiny.

"Aye! I see some of the bloom is gone! sad hours those great folks keep, and their tables are still worse, dyspepsia in every dish."

Emma owned to the truth of the first observation.

"But," said Mr. Jackson, "I shall look in upon you some other day, and see what there is to put to rights, for you are not now 'my little laughing girl,' as I used to call you; all can't be well with you when you are not merry."

When tea was over, Mrs. Jackson and some of the gentlemen sat down to whist: her husband read the newspaper. Mr. James Martin declared he could not play cards when there was a fair lady sitting out, and he had a chance of music.

“Aye, do, Miss Legh, give us a song!” exclaimed Mrs. Jackson, “I dare say you have got some new ones from Stoke Park.”

Emma walked towards the instrument, but declared she had nothing new.

“Dear, how extraordinary! well then, do, there’s a love! give us

‘I’d be a butterfly.’

This was readily done; but Emma’s voice had not its usual clearness. Mr. James Martin placed himself behind her chair, and begged for

‘Cherry ripe;’

and followed the song by innumerable questions, (which Emma answered as cautiously as she could,) of who she met on her visit, and who sang there; he exclaimed, addressing himself to her father, who was at cards,

“Only think, sir, of old Price’s son worming himself into a party of lords and ladies!”

“Who do you mean by old Price and his son?” returned Mr. Legh.

“Why, old Everard’s steward, sir, to be sure, don’t you remember Everard’s taking him into his house, and his marrying the favourite house-keeper, and their

naming their first child after their master, who was god-father? The boy turned out a musical genius, with a fine voice, and his protector got him to be a chorister at Eton, and afterwards an occasional tutor in the lower school, and now he sets up for a fine gentleman: his singing gets him into good company, and he hopes it will push him into a good living also."

"Very likely, very likely," said Mr. Legh who was just then intent on gaining the odd trick: when that was over, he added, "I suppose he expects to be the old gentleman's heir, I only hope *he* will not send for me to make his will, I don't like those disinheriting plans; let property go in the right line, and be strictly entailed, that's my idea."

Emma, though she had tolerated Mr. James Martin before her visit to Stoke Park, and thought him good humoured and obliging, if not quite agreeable, now beheld him with symptoms of dislike and disgust she took no pains to conceal, and received, with an air of contempt, quite new to her, all the pert, or as he thought, pretty, things he said to her. Oh, how unlike what she had been used to of late; surely he must be greatly changed; and involuntarily she fetched a deep sigh.

“ Was that for some lost beau, Miss Legh ?” said her presumptive admirer, “ I wish I knew who was the happy man !”

Emma turned away from this observation with a disdain that offended the gentleman ; he addressed her no more, but she thought the evening never would end, it did at last, and she had time to compare past enjoyments with present annoyances—deeply, too deeply, did she regret the first, and perhaps, in her present state of mind, she too poignantly felt the last. It was not only in the society around her that she felt the change, every thing that at home she used to think so happy, was changed also.

Old Joseph was grown stupid, he could not *guess* what she wanted when she rang—he had creaking shoes—left the door open on every occasion, or shut it hard. She wondered how she had ever dined without napkins and water glasses ; could not make Joseph remember, always, to bring her the latter ; in short there were a thousand refinements, she knew nothing of before, that after a week’s usage she felt quite indispensibly necessary. She wished her father would burn wax candles, he could afford it, and she could not bear the smell of others.

Luxury, with all its artificial wants, soon fastens its hold on the mind, and it requires more mental strength to resist them than most people are aware of. There was a stillness in the attendance at Stoke-park, no shutting doors hard, no ringing of bells, or forgetfulness, every thing seemed to come by magic, at its proper time.

Emma tried to occupy her mind with projecting alterations in her father's establishment, but when she proposed any of them to him, he good humouredly said,

“Get a house of your own, Emma, and do as you like then ; I am old, and must go on in the old way.”

And he often added to this parrying, a hint that she might make the experiment when she pleased, and she understood but too plainly that Mr. James Martin was ready to join in it.

Sunday, between the morning and evening service, is a visiting time in a country town. Mrs. Jackson paid a visit to Miss Legh, and her curiosity having been raised and disappointed on a preceding evening, she began with,

“Well, my dear Emma, I don't think you look any better this morning than you did the other night, I have been talking to Jackson about you, and giving him a hint of my opinion, and he will look in presently.”

At this speech Emma's colour returned to its usual brilliancy, and she entreated her father might not be alarmed about her, for really she was *quite* well; she acknowledged to having kept later hours than she was used to at home, but was still very guarded in giving any account of her visit, and answered all the close questioning she was subjected to so vaguely, that Mrs. Jackson was provoked to say,

“I suppose it is very genteel and polite to be so reserved, for you were not so, *Miss Emma*, before you went to Stoke Park to learn quality airs.”

But this sarcasm did not gain the point aimed at.

Mr. Jackson soon joined his wife, and, with the acumen that belongs to medical men, saw a little into Emma's true state; but as he was a friendly, good-natured man, he suppressed his real opinion, and only said,

“Bad hours! bad hours! country *dissipation*, the next thing to town racketing; quiet, and a little change of scene, and amusement of mind, is the best thing; a visit to your friends the *Grahams* for instance.”

He said this as Mr. Legh entered the room, and purposely for him to hear. The fond father had not been blind to the alteration his dear girl had undergone, both in looks and spirits; he fancied the *acting* might

have been too much for her ; and as he was reluctant to part with her again, he proposed asking Mrs. and Miss Graham to spend a fortnight with them, at Hatchcomb. Mr. Jackson acquiesced, saying,

“ We will try that first, and if a little change of air is necessary, my little patient can return to Wingfield.”

Mrs. Graham was obliged, at first, to refuse this invitation to herself ; a kind neighbour was in a dying state, and Mrs. Graham’s attentions were so great a consolation to her in her last moments ; till they were over, she could not leave home ; but for her daughter, she joyfully accepted the invitation, she was in delicate health, and her mother anxiously wished her to be under Mr. Jackson’s care

He took great interest in both his young patients, and saw with concern that Miss Graham’s complaints had the same alarming tendency that her father’s and sister’s had. Emma’s he was not deceived in, either, they were *mental*, but he made light of them to Mr. Legh, and laid the greater stress on the benefit that Miss Graham would derive from sea air, as well as his daughter, for he well knew his generous heart would be most anxious to do any thing in his power for Mrs. Graham’s comfort.

Mr. Jackson recommended a month at Brighton, as most likely to answer to both young ladies, and as soon as Mrs. Graham was relieved from her melancholy attendance, she came to Hatchcomb and readily acceded to the scheme.

A few days afterwards Mr. Legh's carriage, and two of his trusty servants, conveyed the ladies to the Steyne Hotel, at Brighton, and in a few days, his purse provided them with a comfortable house on the Marine Parade.

Mrs. Graham was not long discovering that she had formed a just opinion as to the dangers and disadvantages that might attend Emma's visit to Stoke Park ; but as her advice was rejected, and the mischief done, the most friendly part she could now act was, if possible, to discover the root of the evil, and, as far as it was in her power, to remedy it.

The fastidious refinement that Emma had contracted, from living in a style she was not accustomed to, she hoped would wear itself off ; but there seemed a *deeper* evil, which must be probed with a gentle hand.

She was persuaded her daughter was in Emma's confidence, but she did not mean, or wish, to tempt

her to betray it; her own observation might more effectually lead her to the point.

A fortnight of their intended stay at Brighton had passed away quietly, and unmarked by any incident; the young ladies kept early hours, walked much by the sea, and their evenings were spent in reading.

Mrs. Graham had the comfort of seeing that both her charges improved daily; what the air did for one, the gay and varied scene did for the other; the cheeks of both were again beginning to bloom, and, as this change respected her daughter, it was a source of heartfelt joy to Mrs. Graham, for it pointed out a mean of checking the baneful disease that prevailed in her family.

Emma's was mental malady, she felt sure; there was a reserve about her that was foreign to her character; and there was also a restlessness equally so, she was always at the window, and her favourite occupations were laid aside, to watch the carriages, &c. that passed; and, when walking, an eagerness at the approach of equestrians, and a look of disappointment, that excited Mrs. Graham's particular attention.

One day, coming up from the chain pier, a gentleman galloped by, but instantly pulled up his horse, and turned back towards their party. Emma evidently

restrained herself from darting forward to meet him, she had taken two quick steps towards him, and then stopped—he dismounted, and shook Emma so heartily by the hand, that Mrs. Graham, who was not accustomed to the fashionable greetings that almost dislocate the shoulder, looked on with surprise.

The gentleman was an agreeable looking young man, and evidently of the higher class of society. Mrs. Graham now felt sure she had discovered, not only Emma's disease, but its cause: her heightened colour—her brightened eye, told the tale; her kind and maternal friend watched her with no common anxiety; and was introduced, with her daughter, as Emma's particular friends, to Mr. Duprée.

They talked over their *séjour* at Stoke Park, Emma enquired for Lord and Lady Tintern, Mr. Duprée had lately seen the latter, in all the bustle of preparation for leaving England, her lord was going on a special mission to Russia, and she was the happiest of mortals in accompanying him. After various other questions, a great deal of hesitation, and a sort of fluttered trembling manner, though Emma flattered herself there was great calmness in it, she ventured to say,

“Do you know how Lord John Leslie does, and if he has recovered his accident?”

“Oh! I believe perfectly,” replied Mr. Duprée, “it was not so bad as at first imagined, he is gone abroad for three or four years, he means to visit every part of Greece, and penetrate as far as possible into Egypt; and if he escapes the malaria, and all the other dangers, he will run into, for you know he is a most enterprizing and indefatigable traveller, we shall have abundance of new tales of wonder from him, on his return.”

The various changes Emma's countenance had undergone during this speech were not lost on Mrs. Graham; she evidently tried that her emotions should not be seen by her companion, by turning her head from him, and pretending to do something to her parasol.

Her kind friend, Mrs. Graham, was not a little puzzled between the present, as she thought, lover, and the absent one, who seemed to excite so deep an interest; but still there was some clue to follow.

Mr. Duprée walked with them to their door, leading his horse, and, taking leave, he applied to Mrs. Graham, and asked if he might be permitted some other time to enquire after her, and the young ladies: this could not be refused.

As soon as they got in, Mrs. Graham ventured to ask Emma who her acquaintance was.

“She only knew him,” she replied, “as one of the Stoke Park party, but he was a favourite with every one, and had been always particularly kind and good humoured to her.”

“And who was his friend you enquired after?” asked Mrs. Graham.

Emma trembled, and was so excessively agitated by the question, that her friend regretted she had asked it at that instant, but in a few moments she recovered herself sufficiently to say,

“The gentleman who saved my life when the scene fell, Lord John Leslie. Sophy knows all about it, but I did not like papa should be frightened, as perhaps he would not let me go there again.”

“Oh, my dear, in that I think you judged right; when a danger has been averted, there is no use in thinking more about it, than thankfulness to *Him* to *whom* above *all* others we owe our safety. I commend your gratitude also to your apparent preserver.”

During these few sentences, Emma's colour had varied from a damask rose to a lily, and the latter prevailing, Mrs. Graham said, “I am sorry any thing should revive painful recollections, but you know, dear Emma, I am just now, by deputy, supplying a parental

relation to you, and I cannot, unmoved, see you so agitated."

Emma threw her arms round Mrs. Graham's neck, hid her face in her bosom, and burst into an hysterical fit of tears and sobs.

"My sweet girl!" said Mrs. Graham soothingly, "don't distress yourself; tell me any thing you like, and only tell me what you like, I will guess the rest."

"Oh, no, my dear maternal friend! my mother! allow me to call you so," sobbed out Emma, "don't guess! there is nothing to guess! I am only weak and foolish."

"Tired, perhaps, with your walk," said her considerate friend, "let me lay you upon the sofa."

"No, no! I thank you! I had rather go to my own room, and take off my walking things."

Mrs. Graham acquiesced; a fresh clue was now given her, and she followed it as far as she could without implicating her daughter, although Emma, in a moment of agitation, had referred her to Sophy. She guessed the whole, though perhaps was not aware of the lengths Lord John had gone, but she felt sure, by Mr. Duprécé's manner, all hope for Emma was at an end, and that her false lover had left the country for

years, and had probably already forgot *her* in another, and similar pursuit.

Retired to her room, and alone, Emma gave free way to her tears, repeating to herself a thousand times, all is over!!! When this burst of grief was past, her pride came to her aid, and she determined to drive from her mind, by every possible effort, one who had so cruelly trifled with her feelings, with her heart!!! This resolution was more easily made than carried into execution, but every struggle she made produced additional strength.

Mrs. Graham, with her usual good sense, forbore to touch directly on the tender subject ; she knew “ that it is *suspense* and *hope* that make the food of misery,” that *certainty* is always endured, because known to be past resistance, and felt to give defiance to struggling. She was too judicious to inveigh on all occasions against the perfidy of men, or even to hint at her suspicions of the full delinquency of Emma’s quondam lover ; she knew nothing was so likely to raise her up as his defender, however she might herself feel his base desertion ; the less of his conduct that was revived the better, forgetfulness was the only plan. Yet, without

pointedly adverting to the subject, she often spoke of the despicable meanness with which men of the world indulged their *vanity*, and their *egotism*, when they met with an artless young woman, in winning a heart they mean finally to desert, and leave to break !

To know that we are only suffering a common calamity, however bitter, makes us ashamed of complaint.

Such conversations were not lost on, or unprofitable to, Emma, nor were the equally judicious observations Mrs. Graham made on the disadvantages of forming connexions with those in a more elevated class than ourselves, and the miseries of disproportioned marriages. In one of the most accredited novels of the present day, these situations are so ably illustrated by a tale, that though Mrs. Graham did not approve of novel reading in general, and her own taste was of a much higher class, yet she procured this from a circulating library, read it aloud, which gave her an opportunity of enforcing and illustrating some of its precepts.

She had the satisfaction of having daily proofs that her beloved young friend was regaining her peace of mind by her improved spirits, and the returning bloom on her cheeks. Mr. Dupréc occasionally called on

them with a new book, or an interesting newspaper. He fully appreciated the conversation of Mrs. Graham, and laughed with the young ladies. He sometimes joined them on the public walks, pointed out some extraordinary characters that ride and drive on the West Cliff, told them the names of all the distinguished persons at Brighton, and some amusing anecdotes of them.

One day, as they were walking on Brunswick Terrace, Mr. Duprée said to Emma,

“There, Miss Legh, is your old friend, Mrs. De Cameron, don't she patronize you here?”

“Heaven forbid!” replied Emma, “she is one of the last people I should wish to meet, you know how she always plagued me.”

“You will not escape her for all that.”

“Pray,” said Mrs. Graham, “is the lady you call Mrs. De Cameron the widow of Captain Daniel Cameron, who died in some unfortunate way in South America, and whose widow was with him, and shipwrecked on her return home, and published an account of it?”

“The same,” he replied.

“ But why,” asked Emma, “ does she write her name as if it was a French one ?

“ Oh !” returned Mr. Duprée, “ that originated in a mistake of Dunois in reading her card as Mrs. De Cameron, and she was so pleased with the conceit, and struck with the vanity of appearing to be of Norman extraction, she, by a little flourish of her D confirmed it—but here she comes,” and, making his bow, he disappeared.

She would perhaps have passed Emma, if she had not seen her attendant.

“ Miss Legh, I protest ! and in her usual bloom and beauty ! I see one of your swains at least, is faithful, hold him fast, he is worth ten of your false one.”

Emma tried to laugh, but she could hardly do more than colour, and rejoiced at some acquaintance of Mrs. De Cameron’s coming up, and engaging her attention, so that they separated.

But a volume was now opened to Mrs. Graham, and she profited by its contents, in the medicine she applied to the mind of her young friend, whom she had the pleasure of restoring to her father in such re-

novated bloom and spirits, he could not refrain from tears of joy when he again embraced his own—own Emma, and Miss Graham had not profited less by the excursion.

Mr. Duprée took every opportunity of improving his acquaintance with Mrs. and Miss Graham and Emma; the great good sense, high principles, and gentle manners of Mrs. Graham, quite attached him to her. He confided to her his intention of taking orders, consulted her on his previous studies, and by her recommendation and assistance procured the curacy of Fullerton, where she lived, and availed himself of the library of her late husband in his professional studies, and of her valuable advice in his parochial duties.

In a very few months after taking possession of a beautifully situated parsonage, on the borders of Windsor Forest, destined for the curate, with the full approbation of her father, and of his own family, who, though not noble, were of the highest class, he made Emma the beloved mistress of it.

Do not, gentle reader, think her fickle in so soon transferring her affections. The heart is never so open to a new attachment, as when suffering from a recent

disappointment, discarded by what it confided in, the aching void is more easily filled up.

Not many months after his marriage, business called Mr. Duprée to London ; in Regent-street he met Lord John Leslie in deep mourning, they mutually stopped.

“ I thought, Leslie, you were at the source of the Nile.”

“ I have been very near it, but my amiable brother has been so good as to kill himself by his intemperance and rashness, and I am in his shoes.”

Taking Mr. Duprée’s arm, they walked together down St. James’-street ; when, after a little conversation, Lord Windermere, as he then was, said,

“ By the bye, do you know what is become of that nice girl we acted with at Stoke Park, I think you were a sort of swain of her’s ?”

“ I left her perfectly well at Fullerton this morning.”

“ Does she live there ?”

“ I am proud and grateful,” replied Mr. Duprée, “ to say she does, and makes the felicity of *my* life.”

Lord Windermere turned pale, loosened his arm, and turned into Brookes’ !

We understand, he very soon after this meeting consented to marry an heiress his father had selected for his elder brother, as a means of retrieving the estate, a woman for whom he had not the slightest attachment, and with whom he lived miserably ; paying the just price for his HEARTLESS VANITY and EGOTISM.

COUNTRY HOUSES.

CHAPTER I.

WINDING UP.

All that glitters is not gold.—*Old song.*

A COUNTRY house, with a large party in it, is considered by the Lady Mothers of the present day, most favourable to matrimony, as it often winds up a London flirtation.

Almack's has disappointed its projectors, few matches are made there ; and the anxious matrons take the same corner of the blue sofas night after night, and season after season, till their blooming daughters are grown pale and thin from late hours, and "hope deferred." The fair candidates are too numerous, and

are seen too often in the same place, and by the same set of men. In short, if the Lady Patronesses would honestly make the acknowledgment, they would own that their system was consuming by the fire it carries in its own bosom—its *exclusiveness* now makes its dulness.

When it began, there was a rage for dancing amongst young men of fashion, and, though all could not be Worcester's, or St. Aldegande's, they were imitators. Ten years has numbered out their 'dancing days,' and their places are supplied only by Guardsmen, whose first regimentals have not lost their gloss; or Lancers, whose utmost efforts have not been able to raise nine hairs by way of mustache on their upper lips.

Then the Opera is a failure! the men are so occupied with the favourite singer or dancer, that Venus herself, drawn by her doves, would be neglected, if *Malibran* sang, or *Taglioni* danced.

And those abominable Clubs!!! all who are *bons-partis* only dine where there is a capital cook! but 'they don't dance,' and therefore file off to the whist and écarté of their respective clubs.

Numerous must therefore be the schemes, various the auxiliaries called in to help a slight, but important, impression;* Kensington Gardens—water parties late

in the season—a breakfast at some Villa—*Interesting Bazaars* for the relief of *Foreign* refugees, when our own numerous population are starving. If all these do not bring the wished for proposal—there is nothing for it but a country house, with an Archery meeting, or a *fancy ball*, two hundred miles from town.

It was a beautiful morning in the beginning of July, when, though according to modern phraseology, ‘the verdant face of nature wore her loveliest and softest garb,’ she was deserted, for the dust of Hyde Park, or the rough trodden up gravel of Kensington Gardens. A portion of the fine world still lingered in town, there were yet a few, and those *choice* parties in prospect; and, over these last engagements, Lady Honiton, and her three daughters the Ladies Aston, were consulting, when Lord Honiton entered the room, and, throwing some open letters and newspapers on the breakfast table, announced, in that decided tone of voice that expects no reply, that he intended removing his family in a few days to Inglewood, his place in Cumberland.

The young ladies exclaimed in concert, Oh, Papa! adding a sigh to the exclamation.

Lady Honiton, with more tact, said,

“ I fear it quite impossible for *us* to go so soon.”

“ Every thing is possible, that people have a mind to do,” replied her lord.

“ That may be philosophically and mathematically true, my Lord, but not always *practically* so ; we have still some important engagements, a water party the end of next week, which I have been this month arranging, and of which I am to be the presiding matron. And then the Marquis of St. Leonard’s breakfast, at Richmond, Monday week—really he has made such a point of Adelaide and Louisa being there, it is impossible to disappoint him.”

“ Business comes before pleasure,” said Lord Honiton, rather stiffly, “ that blockhead Wilson, has mistaken my orders about cutting away some part of the nether wood, to let in a view of the lake, and if I don’t get down to stop him, all my plan, which so much pleased *you*, will be spoilt, and what I meant as an improvement, will turn out a blemish.”

As this was said in no yielding tone, Lady Honiton, in a most subdued and intreating manner, said,

“ But could not *you* go without *us* ; we should soon follow, and Clara, who is not invited to the breakfast, could accompany you.”

Lady Clara's face was not made for pouting, it was smiling as Hebe's, but yet, on this occasion, some little cloud did come over it, and her judicious mother gave her daughters a look to leave the breakfast room. Excellent and comprehensive as her maternal instructions had been, they had not yet arrived at the point of conjugal management, or domestic chicanery; she therefore wisely wished to have her 'honoured lord' quite to herself, lest a little ill-timed opposition from them should spoil her whole plan.

Lord Honiton *liked* his own way as well as any other lord of the creation, but he did not always find it convenient to say *Le Roi s'avisera*, for his lady was apt to bring forward a very powerful argument in favour of *her own* plans, viz., that he had three marriageable, and *unmarried* daughters, to whom it was not convenient to give marriage portions.

It is true he had been told over and over again, in order to win him to her measures, of the splendid hopes Lady Honiton entertained for Lady Adelaide, and Lady Louisa, from the admiration they excited, but as yet these brilliant prospects had been disappointed; and though "hope deferred maketh the heart sick," it had no such effect on the quiet temper of

Lord Honiton. He certainly *did* wish his two eldest daughters well married; for he heard so much of it, he was quite tired of the subject. But Lady Clara was his favourite, and he hoped to keep her a little longer as his riding and walking companion; in truth he never liked to look to the period when he might lose her as such, and so long as no matrimonial offer was agitated for *her*, he the more readily gave in to those for her sisters; and, like the larks in the fable, he felt himself safe, till Lady Adelaide and Lady Louisa were disposed of. Lady Clara's extreme youth was another security; she had been brought out much sooner than such good judgment as Lady Honiton's would have pointed out; but an old governess had died, when Lady Clara was just at an age when it was very difficult to make her submit to new rules, or to be treated as a child; and, besides, such a governess as she *now* wanted, was very expensive; masters would do as well, and so, between economy and inclination, her calculating mother settled the point, and determined to bring her what is called *half out*; her youth and her natural vivacity were attractive, they might be useful to her sisters, in bringing more men about them; the attraction of a new face is often incalcula-

ble ; though the *eldest* sister did not duly appreciate this advantage, and of course kept a sharp eye on her ; and on those, also, on whom she was supposed to make any impression.

But we must return to the conjugal dialogue : — when the young ladies had left the room, their mother pressed her suit, by assuring her lord that she had the most *material* and *important* reasons for wishing to prolong their stay in town, only a very, *very* short time ; and gave so decided a hint that a matrimonial scheme was the object, that Lord Honiton could not help saying,

“ If I may presume to be so curious, who is the person on whom you are now ~~fixing~~ your eyes ? ”

“ My dear lord, I wish most sincerely that you had spared me that question a little longer, for, really the thing is so in embryo, I hardly dare breathe my wishes to myself, for fear they should be defeated ; though to bring them to bear, occupies my waking thoughts, and my nightly dreams.”

“ I wish your dreams may be better realised than many others of them have been, if they make you so very anxious,” replied Lord Honiton.

Perhaps his curiosity would have slept, but, in the

face of his apparent indifference, Lady Honiton could not help saying,

“ Adelaide has received such marked attentions from the young Marquis of St. Leonards ! ”

“ And can you really wish, Lady Honiton, to tie a daughter of your's to such an idiot as that ? ”

“ Oh ! I assure you, you are much mistaken, he is by no means so silly as he is thought, *I* have heard him really make *very good* observations.”

“ You are the first person then, I am sure.”

“ But, my lord, if he is silly, he is good-natured, and you know what a fine fortune he has, and two beautiful places in England ; and in Ireland he is quite a petty sovereign, besides, Adelaide has sense enough to direct him.”

“ I am not so sure of that either, and besides *I* had rather she had a husband who could direct *her* ; one she could honour, and look up to ; not despise, and try, perhaps vainly, to control ; be assured, Emily, a woman appears to greater advantage as an *obeying*, than as a *ruling* wife, for my part, I cannot understand how parents can shut their eyes to the consequences that so often follow marrying their daughters to estates, not to persons : some centuries ago, marriages in our rank of life were contracted like royal ones, whilst the parties

were in their cradles ; they did not generally turn out ill, because women were then little beyond domestic slaves to despotic lords, now they are educated to be, as they ought, their dearest friends and companions, and they mix so much in general and dissipated society, instead of keeping in the bosom of their families, that if they marry a man they do *not* love, they soon find out one they *do*, and bring misery and disgrace on all who belong to them. I wished to have had a better opinion of Adelaide, than to think she would have given her hand to a man who can never obtain her heart, and still more that she could tie herself for life to one whom I must call a fool."

"What you say has a great deal of truth and good sense in it," replied Lady Houston, with her blandest smile, that smile which had carried so many points before, "but times alter, and we must alter with them, the last war has thinned the race of men, and really girls seem to have increased more than two-fold ; if they do not take what they can get, half of them must remain single, a burthen to their elder brothers : and the second rate gentry are so numerous, and encroach so on *us*, that without a splendid income, we must retrograde : it really seems, to my judgment, that this

would be a most devoutly to be desired match. I am sure half the mothers I know will be dying with envy, and ready to tear Adelaide's coronet from her brow."

The subject would bear no farther discussion, and both parties made a pause; when Lady Honiton simply asked,

"May I tell the girls that you consent to take Clara, and leave us?"

"Yes."

"And may we hope you intend to keep your promise of giving them an Archery meeting, at Inglewood?"

"Certainly, they may depend on that: it is a county affair, and ~~may~~ be useful to Ottery's interest; I only bargain that they do not desire to have it before his arrival, which I hope will be in August."

As Lord Honiton put his hand on the lock of the door, he added,

"I send, or take, most of the servants, and horses; one pair, and the under butler, and a footman *must* be enough for you; Mrs. Johnson and Williams must precede me, you cannot want to give dinners;" he might have added *suppers*, which were the most likely

to answer Lady Honiton's purpose, but he left that to her conjecture, and closed the door.

Though, far from being herself satisfied with his conversation, she wisely resolved to make the best of it to her daughters. On her way to their boudoir, a servant met her with a salver covered with notes; their size and shape easily told their contents, of invitations, or excuses; these she threw aside; one larger and longer she opened and read; but, before she announced its contents to her daughters, she assured the two eldest, that she had prevailed, and desired Clara to prepare for her journey. "And now, my loves, I have less agreeable information to give, I have a note from Mr. Gordon, he has obtained an Admiralty barge for us, and secured a capital band. But, alas, we are to be tormented with his wife!"

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed all.

Even Clara cried out, "How I pity you."

"It is inevitable, he has been so very obliging," said Lady Honiton, "nothing can be refused to him, he says, here is his note: 'may I hope I have influence enough to procure Mrs. Gordon an invitation to join the party? She has heard of it from Edward Neville, and is, as you may suppose, dying to partake of what she is well assured must be so delightful.'"

“Well, well, it must be so, I suppose,” said Adelaide, “but that abominable woman never rests till she gets every man, worth caring about, into her service. She has so many tricks; I verily believe she would throw herself overboard in order to be taken out, sooner than not make a scene, or create a sensation.”

“Never mind, Adelaide, we will out-manœuvre her, never fear, I know her well; and, recollect, I am the Commandante of the party. I fear I have many excuses by the notes Richards has just given me, but I have left them in the other room.”

“None from Colonel Neville?” asked Lady Clara, with an arch look at her sister Louisa.

“Oh,” answered Lady Honiton, rather pettishly, you may be sure he will come; but, recollect, Clara, for you are a very young girl, those soldiers of fortune, and younger brothers, are people of very little importance in such parties, they merely fill them up, if better disappoint you.”

“If less agreeable people stay away, you mean, mamma.”

A look from her mother silenced any farther observation.

CHAPTER II.

OF what tough materials ought mothers to be made ! instead of being, as the language of poetry, and romance, makes them, the *gentler* and the *weaker* sex, to bring forth—to bring up—and to bring out—children, the last by far the hardest task, and coming too after all the wear and tear of the other two, when the weary matron would have been glad to recruit her shattered frame, and consult her own ease ; to toil night after night, to ball after ball, two and three of an evening ; and, when returned home after this fatigue, what sleepless anxious nights, lest the well-laid plan should *not* succeed ; lest some newer and prettier girl, or some more desperate and better calculating mother,

should step in between her and her hopes, and end them in disappointment !

A mother who has *three* daughters to take out, and get off, ought to have the temper of an angel, to keep her from "hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness ;" and the inexhaustible strength and constitution of an elephant to endure the fatigues of a London spring ; One would imagine that the great moralist who asserted that "marriages in general would be as happy and often more so, if they were all made by the Lord Chancellor, upon a due consideration of characters and circumstances, without the parties having any choice in the matter " had gone through the arduous duties of a modern mother. How many valuable lives amongst English matrons would such a plan save ! We should again have octogenarian grandmothers, in black hoods and faces with scarcely a wrinkle. Now many of the mothers fall in the cause, before even half their matchless daughters are married.

It must be owned the Chancellorship would be a less enviable situation, no one man could go through the fatigues of it. But a vice-chancellor, whose sole business it would be to match people "according to characters and circumstances," would be a new place ;

and if an Indian judgeship, where the incumbent could not expect to live seven years, has had forty-seven candidates, this *matrimonial* Chancellor's situation, whose life would have nothing beyond the common risk, would be competed for by all the silk gowns at the bar. Curious speculations would arise from such a new court ; and even the clubs in St. James'-street and Pall-mall would be furnished with subjects for betting ; and what anxiety would be created among portionless beauties as to *who* this powerful Chancellor would decree to *them*. He would be more sought after, more flattered, by Lady Mothers and their charming daughters, than any lord who ever sat on a woolsack—and his wife ! if he had one, how she would be invited, and fêted !—But we must leave these speculations to future consideration, and return to Lady Honiton, who felt most acutely, both in body and mind, that this was her third season, and no daughter married ; her Lord, unfortunately, did not enter into her feelings, indeed men could not understand such delicacy.

She was fortunate in having a friend, who, if she was not duly qualified to understand *all* she felt, yet was a patient listener, and a kind and soothing sympathizer.

Miss O'Brian was a cousin of Lady Honiton's, the latter was only daughter to the Earl of Tipperary, descended on her father's side from Roderick O'Connor, who, in Henry II.'s time was sovereign over all the petty princes of Ireland. On her mother's side she boasted a higher antiquity, and could trace her maternal lineage to the prince of Munster, who, in the time of Edward II., boasted, to the Pope, that he was the lineal descendant of one hundred and ninety-seven sovereign princes, and from this stock also came Miss O'Brian. But as Lady Honiton must be considered the more important person ; though her cousin made herself of the utmost consequence in her power ; we shall inform our readers, that Lady Honiton's mother, being a catholic, her daughter, according to the usual stipulation in marriages between a catholic and a protestant, was brought up in the faith of her mother, and placed, at an early age, in a convent at Bruges, where she remained, with short occasional visits at home, till she was fifteen, when her mother's death recalled her.

The Nuns of St. Catherine very naturally wished to have a person of Lady Emily Bourke's rank added to the sisterhood, and even held out to her the prospect of becoming their Abbess ; but all the persuasion availed

not, for besides her own natural gay disposition, there was amongst the pensionées a Miss Gahagan, a girl of uncommon vivacity, whose greatest delight was to ridicule and laugh at the sisterhood ; and the old priest, who attended as confessor, was not less a subject of mirth to her, and others of the Elevées.

Lady Emily therefore returned home, with no other religious impressions than a few irksome forms, which she had been taught by her friend and companion, to consider “frivolous and vexatious.” Of the pure doctrine of the gospel, its precepts and its hopes, she was utterly ignorant, though she could most fluently repeat her *Paternosters* and *Ave Maria's*.

Lady Emily was removed from this nunnery to the care of an aunt, Lady Grace Bourke, sister to Lord Tipperary, a protestant in heart, and a christian in practice ; and it was not therefore a work of much labour to her, to convince her niece of the fallacies of the church in which she had been educated ; or to persuade her to embrace the religion of her father, and desert one of which she understood little beyond its forms, and they were connected with the fear of being doomed *for life* to a convent.

It too often happens that those who turn from catho-

licism to protestantism, quiet their consciences by persuading themselves the difference between the two modes of faith is not great, that it is merely taking different roads to heaven; those who are thus converted are either lax protestants or semi-catholics, clinging a little to the shewy part of popery, abjuring only the penances and privations.

Lady Emily Bourke had not long left her convent, when she was presented at the vice-regal court—she was exquisitely handsome, and of the beauty peculiar to the women of her country, the darkest hair with complexion dazzling from its whiteness; her features were of that classic form they seemed chiseled in marble or alabaster, fine teeth, clear blue eyes, and a forehead marked by the most perfectly penciled eye-brows; her cheeks were colourless, excepting when very much excited, or animated by exercise, and the tint was evanescent, it would have spoilt her if it had been permanent—her figure was elegant and commanding, above the common height.

That such a person should attract admiration, and shine the star of so small a court, must have been quite a matter of course; but the most distinguished of her admirers was Lord Otterv. eldest son to Lord

Honiton, the then Lord Lieutenant: that his father disapproved of the attachment is little to be wondered at, Lady Emily had only her beauty as her dower, her father had nearly ruined himself in attempts to drain a bog, that, perhaps, was in extent equal to the territory of his ancestor Roderic O'Connor, or that of the Earl of Munster, or any of his hundred and ninety-seven progenitors—to him it had literally been a *bog* to *sink* his other property in.

Lord Honiton, a man of expensive habits, and with a taste for splendour and magnificent representation beyond the allowance granted for his situation, had greatly injured his own private fortune. But strong attachment on the part of his son, and successful manœuvres (yclept jobbing) on the part of Lord Tipperary, he consented to the match, upon his son's making some sacrifices which his own extravagance had made necessary. Lord Ottery obtained the woman of his heart, at the expense of a considerable portion of his future estate.

At the time of these transactions, Miss O'Brian was too young to profit by the brilliant success of her relation, to whom she only succeeded in her situation amongst the Nuns of St. Catherine, and on her return

from her convent, and, though she remained fixed in her faith, she was equally averse to dedicate herself to a religious life. She was an orphan with a small portion, and could she have been contented to live in her native province of Munster, that portion would have maintained her in comfort and respectability, and even allowed of her visiting the capital, and enjoying occasionally the gaities of the Phoenix-park, but, after the Union had diminished the splendour of the Irish capital, Miss O'Brian *must* pass her springs in London, where *all* her friends were.

Somebody has remarked, "that few people suffer more privations than the *shabby genteel*," those who make appearances above their means; and however Miss O'Brian might, with all her line of one hundred and ninety-seven kings, be offended at being so classed, yet a very small lodging in Green-street, Grosvenor-square, one extraordinary Irish maid, who lived with her more from family attachment than emolument, was her whole establishment; her anxiety to be asked *every where*, drove her to various shifts that might be called degrading; but to get *taken* where she was invited was a work of still greater difficulty; to prevail on one friend to take her to, on another to bring her from, would, to a

less persevering person, have determined her to stay at home ; but she could not live out of society, and besides, her lodging and her dress so exhausted her purse, that she felt even the pressure of a single dinner, composed of one mutton chop and a potatoe. But in return to those who found a place at their table, or in their carriage, or who lent her a footman, she did a thousand little offices that belonged to no one, and which no one liked to undertake: her kindest friend was Lady Honiton, to her discomforts she was a ready listener, and in her difficulties a useful coadjutor.

There are many such hangers on the skirts of rank and fashion ; and as Miss O'Brian had extensive connexions she had constant employment, and fancied herself a most important personage, trusted with *delicate* commissions which no common skill could execute, and charged with secret negotiations no common head could carry.

After Lady Honiton had left her daughters, she returned to her own boudoir, (there is no other name yet invented for a lady's exclusive apartment, however degraded this may have become) and throwing herself on a *fauteuil* (of which royalty might have disputed

the possession,) she read over the notes of excuse she had received ; and referred to the list of her water party : thus engaged, the door opened, and, unannounced, entered Miss O'Brian.

“ My dear Juliet,” exclaimed Lady Honiton, “ how glad I am to see you, you are the very person whose assistance I want, and I was just going to send George for you.”

“ Too happy Lady Honiton to be devoted to you, but what is the matter ? for you really look worried to death, I never saw any body so nervous.”

“ There is reason enough ! do my dear creature get me my salts from that table, and then you shall hear all ; for I know I shall have your pity. Thank you a thousand times ! these salts have lost their pungency, I think, or my poor head is beyond their reach : now hear me, what do you think of Lord Honiton, who is always so good natured and considerate, having peremptorily determined we should all go to Inglewood early in next week ! only imagine ! with our water party and breakfast at Richmond, quite brutal, quite unlike him—Well, this I parried, and he has consented to go himself, and take only Clara, but as he never travels on a Monday, that Sunday may not

be a packing day, Clara will go on the water party; to the breakfast she is not invited, and I am rather glad she is not, on many accounts."

"Well, then, I think you have not much reason to complain of your lord," said Miss O'Brian.

"Stay, and hear, before you decide, he takes almost all the servants with him, particularly Mrs. Johnson, and *le chef de cuisine*, Williams, so it will be totally impossible for me to give a supper, after either of these parties, and you well know the importance of a supper on such occasions."

"Oh, but you could employ Gunter, Lady Haverdale always does."

"But you do not consider, my dear," replied Lady Honiton, "what it is to employ Gunter! Lady Haverdale, whose lord pays nobody, may do so, but *my* lord never leaves a single bill unpaid in town, he settles all with his steward, and only just leaves what Johnson tells him, and he is a nice calculator, will just serve for the current expense of the week we are to remain; and, I am sure I can spare nothing out of my own purse, important as the occasion is, for I have drained it to the last, for some fancy hats I had a mind Adelaide and Louisa should have for Richmond, and

of course Herbcault, for I sent to Paris, has made me pay, not only for my whim, but ten-fold for not letting him shew them to any one; if he had done so, he would have made twenty, and all the charm of singularity would be lost, and I am sure the girls cannot buy them, my whole dependence is on you."

"My dear Lady Honiton, you know you may command every thing I have; but my purse, alas! is so nearly empty, I know not how I shall get safe out of London!"

"Don't be alarmed, Juliet; it is your *genius*, and not your *purse* I want to put in requisition, and I know how much the larger fund that is, before I venture to draw on it. Read these notes, and you shall hear my proposal. You see Lord St. Leonard is doubtful, and I fear will, at last, give me the slip."

"Oh! never mind what he *says*, he never *does* as he says, he never means it, he only wants to leave himself at liberty to take any other engagement he may think more amusing; if none offers, he will come to you."

"That is poor dependence on one who is so *recher-*

ché, and after all the court I have made to him," said Lady Honiton, with a deep sigh.

"Well then, you see by that note in your hand, that Mr. Gordon, without whose assistance we could not have got the Admiralty barge, (and there is always great *eclât* in having that,) will force his odious wife into the party, or rather let her force herself, and there was no probability of refusing her. Now, for, this intrusion she must *pay*, and *you* must persuade her to give a supper, either with, or without, Vauxhall, for I shall try to put an end to that part of the plan, by dawdling where we dine, as it will be a moonlight night, and I shall be too tired, and have too bad a headache, to go to a place so full of lights; for, if once young men get to Vauxhall, they always contrive to give you the slip; they soon find company there more to their taste: you may give Mrs. Gordon a hint of this, and you may be sure she will not let a man escape her, between the boat and her own house."

"I wonder Mr. Gordon likes all that."

"Few people, my dear, have what they like, but he bears it very well, that is to say, he does not care a straw about it, and if one of the party threw his wife

overboard, he would be ready to make him a bow, and give us the supper just the same, only, being more liberal of his Champagne, for joy at his *riddance*. This supper, which, at all events, I depend upon *you* for, will make some amends to Adelaide and Louisa, for the torment of her society."

"Doubt not my zeal, my kind friend, I will stir heaven and earth in my little way, indeed, I have no doubt of success."

"Well, then, be a dear good creature, and answer all those notes. But, before you do so, one word on the subject of all others, at this moment nearest my heart: prepare yourself for a surprise! ay! open your eyes! and your ears to hear and believe! that Lord Honiton will not hear of Adelaide having any-thing to say to Lord St. Leonard, even if he *does* propose; he calls him an idiot, and says she wants somebody to guide and direct her; as if the girls of the present day will be guided and directed by any body! one would really think *my* lord had lived before the flood, all his ideas are so antediluvian."

"Wonderful, to be sure! but what do you mean to do—stop in your career?"

"Oh, no! I shall go on as vigorously as ever, and

trust to eighty thousand a year, reconciling any *reasonable* father to such a match! on second thoughts, I will answer St. Leonard's note myself, and ask him to breakfast: I can manage a breakfast to a few, if not a supper, and to own the truth, I am so afraid of his giving me the slip for this party: I will leave him no excuse, he is such a butterfly! but, if ever I get him into *my* net, his pretty painted wings shall pay for all the trouble he has given me; let him look for that! though it is only to *you* who are so discreet, that I would make this confession. When you have answered all these notes, give them to George, and he will take them."

"But, Lady Honiton, though I know who will *not* be of your party, you have not told me who *will*, and I should like to know, and to settle our plans of co-operation."

"I can soon tell you that. The boat holds twenty, but to get twenty, I have asked between forty and fifty; more than half always disappoint. First, for the women: Mrs. Murray Williams and her two daughters; they are quiet harmless souls—only attract what others leave. Myself, and my three daughters, and my most amiable and devoted friend, Miss O'Brian! and Mrs. Gordon: that makes nine. It is always better to

make up the number with men. Well, then, 'first and foremost of the men, is my little bijoux, Marquis St. Leonard, Lord Frederic Montjoy, Colonel Blackburn, and Sir Henry Littledale, for us dowagers."

"I hope, my dear Lady Honiton, you do not mean to include me in that number."

"No, my dear, you shall be provided for, and I hope to your heart's content: well, then, George Blake."

"Which?" exclaimed Miss O'Brian, "there are so many."

"Oh, Childe Harold you may be sure, he is so wrapped up in himself, and so very amusing with his egotism; I grant he is nothing to any one else, but an entertainment, so I should not count him for any thing, only for fear of overloading the boat. Colonel Neville of course, for one can never get rid of him, and his cousin Edward Neville, Charles Fitz Patrick, Major Latour, and Mr. Gordon, that makes only ten, I still want one. Oh, I will have your favourite and devoted countryman, George Dallas."

"For heaven's sake, Lady Honiton, spare me there! you know how absolutely he is my aversion."

"Never mind, my dear, there will be no one else

to be had at so short a notice, he is always attainable, make up your mind, for we must have him."

"You have a good sprinkling of Guards and Blues."

"Yes, they are such good watermen, one must be safe with them, they are so used to the thing, and you are most sure of them in such a party."

And, as Lady Honiton was leaving the room she said, "I have more to talk over with you, so you may as well dine with us, shall George fetch your gown to dress here? or will you take your chance of my sending the carriage after it brings my lord home, he is gone down to the House to finish some committee business, I cannot answer for his time of returning."

"I think I had rather go home, I must leave a message for Mrs. Barton to take me up here, we are going together to Lady Allenhams party; George, if you please, can walk home with me in his way to take these notes; and I shall be ready whenever you send the carriage; I dare say Mrs. Barton will hate me for making her come ten yards out of her way, people make as much fuss about a pair of job horses, as if they were made of sugar. If I do not get to you till the second course, it will do."

CHAPTER III.

How slowly hours creep when pleasure is in prospect, how swiftly when it is attained ! Moralists may talk of sorrow having “leaden wings,” but it is not in its approach, for it always arrives too soon, whilst anticipated pleasure seems to linger by the way.

At length Monday arrived, and Lady Adelaide and Lady Louisa, like Horace Walpole, who, when he expected a party to see Strawberry Hill, would not open his eyes till his valet told him the sun shone—eagerly asked Annette what weather it was ?

“ *Un peu sombre mi ladi.* ”

“ What do you mean ? does it rain ? or does the sun shine ? ”

“ *Ni l'un ni l'autre, mi ladi.* ”

That was some comfort, there was no rain, every thing might be hoped ; and indeed any where except in London, probably the sun shone, though it had not penetrated through the fog of Grosvenor Square.

Most of the expected party assembled at Lady Honiton's, if not to breakfast, yet ready prepared for departure ; only three defaulters ! Lord St. Leonard, who never determined what he would do, till the time for doing it was past ; Mr. Blake, Childe Harold as he was generally called,

“ Who ever by system came too late,
And made his choicest parties wait.”

But nobody minded him, if he was left behind, it would serve him right ; and they could do without him. The other delinquent was Mr. Dallas, but he would join them somewhere no doubt ; but time wore away, and those knowing in the matter, urged departure, or, the tide would be too low to embark the ladies comfortably.

Lady Honiton was obliged to yield to this declaration, though loth to leave the hero of the party ; but after leaving reiterated orders with her porter, and strict injunctions not to be one moment off his post, and *himself* deliver her message to Lord St. Leonard,

that they should *wait* for him at Whitehall stairs, though she knew that was impossible, as tide, like time, waits for no indolent lord. They got into their carriage, and turning into Bruton-street, met the object of her anxiety, coolly walking his horse : great joy was expressed at seeing him.

“ What, off so soon ; well, I suppose I may join you at Whitehall ? ”

“ Oh, certainly,” though to lose sight of him again was dangerous, as he assured them, when he again joined them, by saying,

“ Upon my soul I was very near not getting here at last, for I met Falknor and Talbot going to see that Jew fellow walk his match, near Kingston, and each took a cheek of my bridle, and if my pretty little Miss Emily had not reared, and thrown them off, and started into a gallop, I dare say I should not have been here.”

That he was there, was acknowledged so graciously, that if he had been a man to prefer the society of young ladies to a *walking match*, he must have been flattered and grateful ; as it was, he so often recurred to Kingston, and wondered if the man won,

and if his friends backed him, as to raise doubts of his being exactly in the place he most wished to be.

As had been predicted, the tide had sunk below the proper mark for getting easily into the barge ; and a sort of awkward unsteady platform was obliged to be made use of, the young and active of the party stepped lightly and delicately over it, making but small display of pretty feet, and delicately turned ankles, the elder ladies were dragged in, and a little wicked attempt was made to make Miss O'Brian step into the water, but she piqued herself on her agility in avoiding the trap ; all were seated but Mrs. Gordon, who protested she never could step over those horrid wet boards : expostulation is vain with those who never heard reason ; nor would she submit to be carried by the water-men, at last, with exhausted patience, her husband proposed carrying her himself, and Colonel Neville good-naturedly offered to assist in making a sedan chair with their arms, and at last got her into the barge ; but as they were not the persons she intended should carry her, and she had lost, by her perverseness, the place she wished to occupy, she was as ill-humoured and fidgetty the whole voyage as possible. Mr. Dallas arrived just as the barge had reached the middle of

the stream, and was getting into a wherry to overtake them, when Mr. Blake made his appearance, and though more than half inclined to turn his horse's head homewards, was persuaded to get into the wherry, and the whole of the assembled party set off.

It is acknowledged that on most occasions there is a material difference between turning to the right, and turning to the left. This is particularly felt by a water party embarking at Whitehall Stairs. The right takes them to the verdant and highly cultivated banks, where the silver stream realizes the poet's description. The numerous villas situated on its banks, flocks and herds grazing, give the most gratifying sensations, not unaccompanied by historic recollections, for if the party do not proceed beyond Richmond there are the remains of the palace of Henry VII. and the oak may almost be seen, which his tyrannical son climbed to view the signal of the decapitation of the woman he so fondly loved, so highly raised, and so causelessly and barbarously sacrificed to the gratification of a new passion. If the voyage is extended, the tasteful recollections connected with Strawberry Hill, and again, those that belong to history, rise with the sight of Hampton Court, and Windsor Castle, but these are beyond a day's excursion.

To the left what different objects present themselves, the river now dark and turbid,

On either hand
Like a long wintry forest, groves of masts
Shoot up their spires; the swelling sheets between
Possess'd the breezy void, and sooty hulks
Steer'd sluggish on : the splendid barge
Rowed regular, to harmony around,
The boat light skimming stretch'd its airy wings,
While deep the various voice of fervent toil,
From bank to bank increased.

Either side lined by produce from all quarters of the globe, warehouses and docks filled with their rich merchandise from every country in the world, give ample proof of the wealth, and resources of Great Britain. The Tower too ! what recollections will not that call up ! and Greenwich, and good Queen Bess, and her golden days.

But it is doubtful if any of these recollections affected the party now collected in the Admiralty barge, it probably was only agitated by the projects and prospects of those who filled it ; without much historic remark, or poetical recollection.

Shooting London bridge a little alarmed the ladies, but they were implored by the watermen to sit still, and in a large boat, the fall was not greatly felt. And

the wonders, or the beauties of the banks were disregarded for charades and such like pastimes. Lord St. Leonard contributed his quota, by desiring the servant who accompanied his pine apples, and champagne, to give him the casket intrusted to his care. It was a beautiful little box studded with gold and steel, great was the expectation of its contents—and when opened it presented a model in variegated gold, of the elephant so lately distinguished at Paris; and who, whilst we are writing, is shewing her feats for the amusement of John Bull. All admired the beauty of its proportions, how charmingly the embossed gold imitated the coat of the animal, but the surprise Lord St. Leonard had planned took place whilst the bijoux was in Lady Adelaide's hand he supporting it, touched a spring, when a beautiful piece of Mozart's music struck up; in short it was a musical Elephant, instead of a musical snuff box. After it had received its due share of wonder and admiration, and its beating time with its proboscis had been properly appreciated, its owner returned it into its case, and gave it again into his valet's charge, saying, "It deserves care, for besides the immense trouble I had to get it over, it cost a hundred guineas in Paris."

Passing the Tower just as the elephant was restored to its casket, Lady Clara, exclaimed,

“What is that great building? Is it Newgate?”

“It has often been a prison,” replied Colonel Blackburn, “though built as a place of defence, it is the Tower; look, Lady Clara, at that turret where Anna Boleyn passed the night before her execution.”

The lately admired elephant produced a concatenation of ideas in Miss Fanny Williams’s head, who asked Lady Clara,

“If she had ever seen the Tower, or the animals kept there?”

Lord St. Leonard, who loved an impromptu of that sort, immediately proposed their landing *now* to see it, as Lady Clara expressed a great desire to do so; this proposal was seconded by Miss Fanny Williams, who said,

“When I saw the Tower a year or two ago, there was a lioness with two cubs; oh, such loves, they were like puppies, and one dear creature, followed me about, trying to catch my handkerchief, the keeper cautioned me not to encourage him, but I could not resist it, he was so *very* dear, but unluckily one of the rabbits, kept to feed the Boa Constricta, escaped

out of its hutch, and my darling beast seized on it with such fury, I believe the keeper was quite right, when he said they were never to be depended on, let them appear ever so gentle."

Lady Honiton over-ruled this new plan, saying, "Clara would see the animals better at the Zoological Gardens; if they stopped now, they would hardly reach Belvedere."

"Oh, never mind where we dine," said Lord St. Leonard, "we can stop at Greenwich."

But this did not suit Lady Honiton, she knew that insted of a *pic nic*, it would be proposed they should eat white bait, and dining at an inn was too horrible. She pleaded that she had asked leave to dine at Belvedere, and it had been granted as such a special favour; she could not offend its owner by going elsewhere, when he had ordered accommodation for her, and her party.

"Never mind, ma'am," said Lord St. Leonard, "you need only say we were too late, which we shall, be if we see the Tower."

"That I am quite unequal to," replied Lady Honiton, "you must leave me in the boat," adding, with her softest smile, "another time we will be under

your command, my Lord, but I am afraid, I must consider *myself* as admiral to-day."

"Let us sail under orders," said Sir Henry Little-dale, "no steering right else."

The project for seeing the Tower being negatived, Colonel Blackburn said,

"I am glad it is so determined, for I never like to see those miserable beasts in their unnatural and languid state of existence; after having so often seen them in all their native grandeur and triumph, and I always long to knock those so exhibited at head, and put them out of their misery."

"By the bye, Blackburn," said Lord St. Leonard, "I suppose you have often gone elephant and tiger hunting in India?"

"If you mean, my lord, that I have hunted elephants as well as tigers, I never have been on any party in pursuit of wild elephants; but I have hunted tigers on the back of an elephant, frequently."

"Oh! oh! I did not know the difference," replied Lord St. Leonard, "but I suppose tiger-hunting must be fine sport, only perched up on the back of such a monstrous creature and shut in a sort of box, as I have seen in pictures, must be tantalizing work."

“ It is the only possible way of hunting them, and even that is sufficiently dangerous to satisfy any man—it is one of the disadvantages of Indian sports that their danger and excitement are so very great, that every thing called *sport* in England is too tame to be endured ; before I went to India I was a keen fox-hunter, but now to run after a poor frightened wretched animal, who only tries to hide himself in the first hole he can find, is pitiful after all the stratagem used in attacking a tiger ; and the destruction of such a noble beast has something like glory in it, the thing is fairly fought out—even hunting and shooting Jackals is very superior to a fox-chase, for if you wound one of them, he will hang on your track all day waiting for an opportunity of revenge ; and often collects a body of his own species to assist him, and sometimes their howling rouses higher game, and calls the tiger from his lair, and if he is killed, his friends the jackals are ready at hand to feast on him, or on any one of the hunters who may chance to fall.”

“ I dont know,” said Lord St. Leonard “ that I should be very fond of a sport that might leave me a feast for jackals—at Melton one may break an arm or a leg, but seldom any thing worse.”

“The hunters who are mounted on an elephant seldom receive any injury,” replied Colonel Blackburn, “though I have known instances where the tiger has made a successful spring at a mounted elephant, and fixed himself on his neck, then those in the howdah must make their escape as well as they can, before the enraged elephant, in trying to get rid of his enemy, throws them off; in this struggle the poor elephant driver is generally sacrificed; though there are instances of tigers being shot by a rifle on their spring, and I remember once a tyger springing out of his lair sooner than was calculated on, and so quick is their spring, that one of the poor careless unclashed coolies, who had roused him, had only time to turn round, the moment he saw the eyes of the tiger glisten through the bushes when he felt his claw on his shoulder; but at the same instant a shot from the howdah pierced the brain of the tiger, but though he let go his hold by a dying effort, he drew his claw down the fellow’s back, and tore the flesh from the bone, though the next moment he lay dead on the ground.”

Lord St. Leonard expressed great delight at an account of this sport, though no wish to join in it, and asked Colonel Blackburn if shooting was of the same grand description?

“Every thing in India is on a scale vast beyond imagination, and if I could not refer to Daniel’s Field Sports in India for confirmation, I should be afraid you would consider me a Munchausen, and taking a traveller’s license, but you may imagine how tame shooting into a covey of partridges, or what is tamer still, a *battú* of pheasants, to bringing down an osprey or a golden eagle; the most common shooting in India, is snakes, and that is excellent, the dogs hunt them out of the swamps, and the sportsmen shoot as they appear, but they are so wily and wary, they often shew a good deal of sport.”

“How does the heat, one has heard of as so tremendous, suit such active amusements?” asked Sir Henry Littledale.

“The hours of sporting,” replied Col. Blackburn, “are always before sunrise, the amusement is of course soon over; but as it is always known before hand, where a tiger is likely to be found, or where an eagle has been seen, a party is made up, who go directly to the spot; if the tiger escapes the first attack, you are not likely to see him again, hunt his jungle as you will, but snakes are game always at hand, where there is marshy ground.”

As no one of the party, but Col. Blackburn had

been in India, it was a lucky subject to be started on such an expedition, and he was a person of information, and ready when conversation wanted a spur. The ladies were determined to come in for a share of information, Lady Louisa asked if he wished to go again to India?

“Oh, no,” was his reply, “I think nothing now would tempt me to do so, though I am very glad I did go when I was young, for when I recollect India and all its magnificence, it seems like a beautiful dream, for the recollection is stripped of some of its painful realities.”

“What are they?” demanded Lady Louisa, “for I have always wished I could go to India.”

“Its enervating climate, and the habits it engenders, which unfit one for any other, and the precariousness of life there,” said Colonel Blackburn, “are its objectionable points, but I do not wonder ladies like to go there, it is *their* Paradise.”

“I thought,” said Miss Williams, “that in India women were treated as if they had no souls!”

“Such the Mahomedans consider *their* women,” replied Colonel Blackburn, “and the Hindoos have little more deference for them than you have for a favourite lap-dog ; for if a woman who becomes a widow

refuses to become a Suttee, that is, be burnt on the funeral pile of her husband, she loses her *caste*, and is considered an outcast of all society."

"I thought," said Miss Williams, "that the Indian women burnt themselves for love of their husbands?"

"Far from it, I assure you, it is only the persuasion of relations, and the threats of the priests, that ever get them to make the sacrifice, it is any thing but a *voluntary* one. But it was not of the native women I meant to speak, they are poor, ignorant, superstitious creatures, hardly beyond an infant in understanding or cultivation; it is the European ladies who are Queens, and we are told by a poet, that

'Every woman would be Queen for life.'

So few ladies go to India, they are so *fet  *, and live in such a state of splendor as you have no idea of in this country. I assure you, Lady Louisa, the Queen of England is a private gentlewoman as to retinue, compared with the lady of the Governor General of India, who never even takes an airing without from thirty to fifty attendants. I have often in India been of such parties as the present in Garden Reach, which is a sort of summer residence to many of the inhabitants of Calcutta, and where those oppressed by the climate go for

air, and to live on the water ; the houses are on the banks of the river, and pleasure boats kept by all who reside there. On such a party as this, our attendants would have amounted to eighty or a hundred, and at least ten boats would have accompanied us."

"And who could the people be who filled them, and what could they do with such a crowd?" said Miss Williams.

"I should tire you to death," replied Colonel Blackburn, "if I enumerated half of them ; first, the owner of the boat or pinnace, who manages the party, must take his *consumah*, or house steward, to superintend all ; this man must have a boat for his wine, and his *kutmulgars*, or table servants, of which there is at least one for every person ; then another boat with the *sindar bowberjæ*, or head cook, for without him we could get nothing to eat, and he has almost as many assistants as the *consumah*, and a separate boat for cooking ; then comes the *abdar*, or water-cooler, he is indispensable, and he has his train ; the *chaprasses*, or running footmen, to attend on their respective mistresses, each lady has generally two, these do not associate with inferior servants ; then there is a band of music, sometimes two, and provision boats ; and, in addition to these, almost every lady has her *dingy*, or small covered

boat, with venetian blinds, where she may retire for repose if the heat is oppressive. Besides all these attendants on the water, instead of four ladies coming in a barouche with one footman, as with us, each lady in India is carried separately in her palanquin, has her four bearers, and, if it is any distance, a relay of them, and her two chaprasses with their silver sticks making way for her, and many gentlemen move about in the same way."

"All this," said Lady Louisa, "I should *not* like, I hate to be made a fuss with, or to be very dependent."

"It is impossible to do otherwise in that country, I assure you," replied Col. Blackburn, "besides the languor and disinclination to act, or even almost to think, for oneself. And a certain degree of state is necessary to impose on the natives, population is so immense, that employments would not be found for all, if any person did more than *one* thing; and the rajahs and native princes would think us Europeans beggars, if we did not live a little in their style, and the climate soon reconciles us to indolence and luxury."

"Does the heat prevent European women from any employment; for I should not like," said Miss Williams, "to be able neither to paint nor practice?"

Both are done at first, and some of the ladies keep up their talents and accomplishments; but, in general, after a few years' residence, the health gives way, and they sink into indolence, though I have known instances to the contrary, especially in those who ride on horseback."

"Is that possible in India?" exclaimed both Lady Lousia and Miss Williams.

"Perfectly," replied Col. Blackburn, "only it must be at a different hour from England, at four in the morning, before the sun rises, after that it is dangerous."

"Are the natives in general larger than Europeans?" asked Miss O'Brian, "for I think the blacks one sees in regimental bands seem very tall men."

"I think, generally speaking," said Col. Blackburn, "they are, though they do not strike one so in India, for every thing is on such a prodigious scale. Plains no eye can take in; mountains whose summit no human being can reach; temples and palaces that seem made for giants. When I first returned, I thought I came to Lilliput, and, like Gulliver, could take every thing and every body up in my hand, and fancied my country and my countrymen had diminished and retrograded in my absence. Europeans can have no idea of what popu-

lation is in India, nor imagine how insignificant the Presidency at Calcutta is as to numbers; though thence we may govern one hundred millions of people, and an extent of country beyond calculation. The European population at the seat of government does not exceed twenty thousand, whilst the black inhabitants of native Calcutta only, amount to seven hundred thousand."

"Why, I declare, Blackburn, you are giving us the Arabian tales," said Sir Henry Littledale.

"I have never been either in Arabia or Persia," replied Col. Blackburn, "and cannot subscribe exactly to the truth of the picture the Arabian Nights give, though I know those who assert that they are no fables, but I have witnessed many scenes in Bengal that have made me think of Aladdin's lamp. And having had the good fortune to be a spectator of a grand and unusual display of native magnificence, I was very desirous of seeing the coronation of our late King, as an English coronation is, I know, considered the most perfect specimen of ancient chivalry."

"And what did you think of it," said Lady Honiton, "was it not magnificent?"

"I am afraid to say," replied Col. Blackburn, "that it was so flat and so poor I was quite disappointed."

“ I should like very much to know what, in India, you saw better,” exclaimed Lady Clara.

“ Oh, read accounts of India : you will vote me a bore if I go on ! ” replied Col. Blackburn.

“ But,” said Mr. Gordon, “ though we make but little show amongst the Asiatics, our rapid conquests of such vast territories must give them great ideas of the power and resources of the King of England.”

“ On the contrary,” replied Col. Blackburn, “ they do not think better of the King of Great Britain than of one of their own Rajahs, a sort of lawless marauding chief ; their great Leviathan is the East India Company. The *Cocmpany* as they call it, and as Captain Poppinella has not yet enlightened them on the subject, and explained to them that their High Mightinesses, the East India Directors, are half a dozen elderly gentlemen, in brown coats, and scratch wigs, sitting in divan, on a few rush bottom chairs, round an oak table, who, when they have decided on the conquest of *extensive* Provinces of Indian territory, and the subjugation of *millions* of people, take their umbrellas, and walk quietly home, without a single attendant : if told this, they would not comprehend it. Power, unaccompanied with splendour and pageantry, is not within the reach of their imagination.”

Col. Blackburn stopped for a few minutes, when Lady Louisa reminded him that they had not yet had an account of the procession, that so greatly exceeded our coronation, and the other ladies joining in requesting to hear it,

“I see,” replied Col. Blackburn, “that you are determined, Lady Louisa, to be a Governor-General’s lady, but if I am to be the Sherrazah of the party, I must preface my tale by saying, that after Mr. Pitt’s famous India bill, which enabled the English government to place Indian affairs under a Board of Control, and abridged some of the power of the Directors, as well as strengthened their hands in other respects, I accompanied Lord Cornwallis, who went as the doubly appointed Governor-General, and was one of his aid-de-camps. Little as the native princes understood of this new arrangement, they were made to comprehend something had happened, to which they were to bow; and that, accordingly, they were expected to acknowledge the alliance, if they did not comprehend its mysteries, and to pay a visit to this representative of England, and the Company.

“The Governor General was seated under a rich canopy, in front of the Government-house, attended by his staff, his household, and all the Company’s ser-

vants and residents he could muster; many coming some hundred miles on the occasion, and filling up a very large space behind and on each side. The European troops, and the Seypoys in British pay were carefully kept out of sight. The native Princes had assembled in Calcutta, or encamped in its neighbourhood, and the procession, taking a winding direction, appeared even longer than it really was; though it overspread several miles. It began with the lowest Rajah, Ali Cawn, I think, who is little better than a chief of smugglers and thieves; but he and his son contrived to make a very shewy, and, till others came, an imposing appearance. You, Lady Louisa, who interest yourself in Indian affairs, can have no idea how insignificant the English Presidency appeared amongst this assemblage, and I have no hesitation in saying it would not have been half as imposing, if the people had not been *black*, it contrasted with all their gilding, and their picturesque dresses. A long train of inferior princes and Rajahs passed, before the King of Oude, and the Nabob of Arcot came; they had, besides their troops, their elephants, though they were themselves in palanquins: the Nabob was the last, he was a venerable old man, with a fine Asiatic countenance, jet black, with a long

silver beard reaching to his girdle, but, such a girdle, for ladies to admire ! Imagine all the jewels you have ever seen, Lady Louisa, at a drawing room, collected and covering this gridle, and the pistols and dagger belonging to it, and a turban of the finest shawl, surrounded by a tiara of the same precious stones as the girdle, and also a sort of feather or aigrette ; but his pearls were beyond all price : row after row, hanging down like what I believe you ladies call a negligé, and as large nearly as the eggs of small birds ; the figure of the Great Mogul on a pack of cards will give you some idea of him, only you must imagine the clear atmosphere of India brightening the lustre of these jewels : what struck me most was his bearers, their bright polished skins, their turbans covered with gold, a gold scarf and waistcloth all their clothing ; but the ends of the poles of the palanquin representing golden wings, rested on their black shoulders ; and produced an effect I cannot describe, the Nabob only made a bow to the Governor General without stopping as he passed, the others who preceded him had done the same."

Colonel Blackburn stopped, saying, " Now, Lady Louisa, you must find another *raconteur*, you have exhausted me."

CHAPTER IV.

A party of twenty in a boat, like a party of the same size at dinner, must separate into groups and converse with near neighbours, for what is said at one end, cannot by any possibility edify those at the other, without an exertion of lungs no one likes to use. Colonel Blackburn's auditors were in the middle of the boat, and whilst they were listening to details of India, Lady Honiton, Mrs. Murray Williams, Mrs. Gordon, and Lord Frederic Mountjoy, were discussing a recent elopement, that had taken place within their immediate circle.

Lady Honiton laid great blame on Mr. F——, said "he was very brutish, and so very frightful and disagreeable, she did not wonder a young woman dis-

liked him, not that she meant to defend his wife,—very far from it; she thought Mrs. F. deserved the severest censure.”

Mrs. Gordon joined in the abhorrence of Mr. F., and thought there were many excuses to be made for his unhappy wife.

Mrs. Murray Williams defended Mr. F., said “he was kind-hearted, though a little odd in his temper and manners; and that he deserved a better fate, for he had been most generous to her, in her settlements when she brought him nothing.”

“For my part” said Lord Frederic, “I pity Mrs. F. from the bottom of my heart.”

“Ah!” cried Lady Honiton, “that is always the way with you men, the moment a woman behaves ill, she becomes an object of pity.”

“For shame,” said Mrs. Gordon, “I did not think you had been such a *roué*!”

“Pardon me, ladies, you are both libelling me and my sex most unmercifully; but hear me, I do not pity Mrs. F. because she has broken the laws of God and man, and made herself an outcast of society; but I pity her because she was forced into a marriage she abhorred, with her heart devoted to another; it was a

thing as notorious as the sun at noon-day, that for nearly two years she had been attached to Colonel G——; but Mr. F——'s offers of settlements were too tempting for her father to resist; I rather think her mother would have relented, but Colonel G—— was so treated by them, he had no choice, but going abroad to take himself out of their way, and then the poor girl was worked upon till a reluctant consent was extorted, but she endured first a sort of persecution no young girl could stand against; my only wonder was, that F—— was fool enough to have her, but he was proud of his triumph; Colonel G—— went abroad, and there also, F—— took his wife; the lovers encountered at every place, and in a country where there is greater license and less observation, and with no mother to rescue her, was what has happened wonderful? No! however, I still maintain it is pitiable: had they let her marry G—— they might have been poor, but they had every chance of being happy; now the wealth of worlds cannot make them so; he sees in her the object of his adoration, for such she was, degraded and shunned. He loves society, but he can have little enjoyment of what she cannot partake, and he must reflect that it was the strength of her love for him

that has occasioned this degradation ; what husband or father can now like to invite to his house, or table, a man who before was welcome everywhere ; believe me the thing meets him at every corner—and when by his own fire-side, what sees he ? but spirits broken, by conscious error and crime.”

“ Really, Lord Frederic,” said Miss O’Brian, “ I do believe you are turned saint, and mean to set up methodist preacher ; I am sure you must have been taking a lesson from Irving, or some such enthusiast, for I never heard such a homily, I hope we shall all be duly edified by it.”

“ I am neither a saint, nor a preacher, I assure you, Miss O’Brian, I am only an unfortunate younger brother, and for that reason condemned to be a bachelor, but I do not go about the world with my eyes shut.”

“ Oh ! I dare say not, and you know bachelor’s wives are regulated to a proverb.”

“ Equally with old maids’ children,” replied Lord Frederic, a little maliciously, “ but if you like wise laws, ‘ lookers on, see the most of the game,’ and I believe we unhampered folks are the least prejudiced judges of what we see, though perhaps we might not act wiser if we were noosed.”

"I declare," cried Lord St. Leonard, "it would be good fun to see you noosed, Mountjoy, what a capital husband *you* would make, where shall I find a wife for you? can't you help us, Miss O'Brian?"

"No," she replied, "I would not for the world recommend any one to Lord Frederic, he is so particular."

"And if inclined for a wife, not likely to take any choice but his own," he replied, "but I leave that blissful state for you, St. Leonard, and Littledale; my fate has long been decided."

"For my part," said Lord St. Leonard, "I am determined to see a little of life before I get into the meshes; it is time enough twenty years hence for me to grow a sober Benedict."

"Take care! make no rash resolves, St. Leonard, no one knows when his time is to come," said Lord Frederic, "marrying, like hanging, goes by destiny."

"Ah!" cried Lord St. Leonard, "and both are a *turn off*," and, delighted with his own wit, he laughed most immoderately.

This conversation was any thing but agreeable to Lady Honiton, and being a little afraid of Lord Frederic's observations, she started a new subject, by saying,

"I hope, Lord St. Leonard, you will have such a delicious day for your breakfast."

"O yes, by the bye, I had almost forgot all about it," he answered.

"I should have thought," said Lady Adelaide, "you would have had too much to arrange, easily to forget it ; I do think it must be delightful to indulge one's fancy in such an entertainment."

"So I thought for three days," replied Lord St. Leonard, "but I got confoundedly tired of being asked if I would have *this*, or *that*, done, and they even wanted me to put my name to one thousand five hundred cards, but signing my name, except to a draft, is a piece of kingship I have no taste for, so they lithographed my beautiful sign-manual ; and all the rest I left to Harriet, she delights in the thing, and, as she has made one of Mountjoy's happy marriages, and Egerton can't afford to let her give fêtes, this quite suits her, and she has got *Le Noir*, my cook, who is a capital fellow, he certainly was born for something beyond *le president de la cuisine*, and Gunter to help him, so the devil's in it if they can't cook up something. Harriet has a thousand romantic whims, so I let her have Stanfield, the scene painter at the Opera-house to help

execute her fancies ; all she could get me to do, besides standing the damage, was to drive her three times to Richmond, to settle about a place for it, and I think that was taking as much trouble as she could expect, for we had plague enough to find this place ; we might have borrowed Montagu house, and the gardens to it were very pretty, but would not have held five hundred people ; at last we got a house on the top of the hill, which is to be let, and has a garden also down to the river, only separated by a road, so now she has her heart's content, I hope."

Lady Honiton recollected the house, had been at a breakfast there, given to our late Queen and Princess Charlotte.

" By the bye !" exclaimed Lord St. Leonard, " Le Noir, amongst his accomplishments, plays on the Clarionet, and he has taught two of the other servants to accompany him ; I wish I had thought of it, I would have had them with us to-day ; Harriet when she was staying at Oakdale, used to send them every evening into the woods by moonlight to play ; was not that romantic Lady Honiton ?"

" Quite charming !" she replied, and Lady Adelaide was in raptures at the idea of distant music, and moonlight.

Lady Honiton said, " I had no idea that you possessed such treasures, or I should have made a request to you for them ; I am sure we are not so lucky as I expected in the band we have with us, your servants would have been so much better."

" Oh, no, I don't believe that, but they could have taken their turns while the others took breath," replied Lord St. Leonard.

There were parts of the forgoing conversation that did not quite please Lady Honiton : it was difficult to say any thing was wrong, but it led the wrong way ; however she smoothed her brow, forced her smile, and contented herself, as well as she could, by feeling that she had her little Marquis under her wing. Alas ! how vain are all our schemes, especially those often practiced, on impracticable men.

Mrs. Gordon had never liked her situation in the boat, though it had been the result of her own manoeuvres, she hated to be so penned up amongst women, and her dislike was increased by the peals of laughter at the other end of the barge.

" Do, Lord St. Leonard," said she, " be so charitable as to get me my cloak, and then I can move to the other end of the boat, and have a little air, and

I shall leave a delightful place here for some one else."

He did so, and offered an arm to conduct her, right glad himself to escape also. As they arrived at the bottom, Edward Neville said,

"Is not this delicious?"—

"Delicious!" exclaimed Mr. Blake, "delicious! what in this dirty world can any one call delicious? Ambrosia may be delicious, for, having never tasted it, I cannot decide to the contrary, but I never heard of any thing else that merited that name."

"Oh, you may depend on it, Blake," replied Mr. Gordon, "Ambrosia is not a bit better than the iced lemonade at *Tortonis* or *les milles Colonnes*, nor Miss Hebe who served it out on Olympus, more *seduisante* than the presiding goddess at either of those places: perhaps Dallas, who is a classic and a poet, could settle the point."

"You give me credit for more than I deserve," replied Mr. Dallas, "I am so perfectly content with terrestrial loveliness, I don't trouble my head about those nine Ladies who must be pretty well advanced in years by this time, or any other goddess of Jupiter's Seraglio."

"I think," said Lady Clara, "you should go to India, Mr. Blake; if you had listened to Colonel Blackburn's account, it would have captivated you, being carried in a palanquin, and fanned with peacock's feathers, are quite in *your way*."

"But associating with opium agents, and rice merchants is not at all in *my way*, I assure you, Lady Clara," replied Mr. Blake, "and being shut up for five months with marriage-hunting misses, and fortune-seeking writers and cadets, would to me be insufferable, I should die of the voyage."

"How then," asked Lady Clara, "do you endure a steam packet crossing over to the continent?"

"That is a horror I am seldom doomed to encounter," he replied, "I generally get some friend to put me across in his yacht, and if Somerville's had been in order I should now have been on the blue waters of the Mediterranean instead of the muddy, dingy Thames."

"Don't disparage our dear river," said Lady Clara, "which is

'Though deep yet clear, though gentle yet not dull,
Rough without rage, without o'erflowing full.'

But as you hate and despise every thing English, do tell us what you really think enjoyable?"

"Nothing ! I confess," replied Mr. Blake.

"I'll tell you what Blake likes," said Mr. Gordon, "and let him contradict me if I am wrong. In summer a house at Sorrento, with a felucca always in readiness for a sail to Ischia ; winter spent at Naples ; the carnival at Venice, now and then a little of Paris, England never, except to raise money."

"Why," answered Mr. Blake, "one might endure that, and I am going to try if I can improve on such a plan, by taking a little of Greece or Asia into it."

"Oh," cried Miss Fanny Williams, "what have you done, Mr. Blake, with that dear, darling poodle of your's, from whom, I thought, you were never separated?"

"Pray, pray, don't ask me ! he is dead ! every thing I love, I lose. I never loved any thing but him, and a charming, intelligent monkey, and both are dead !"

"Oh, how moving !" cried Lady Clara, "why you might adopt the words of Moore,

'I never loved a plant or flower but it was sure to fade.'

I declare your pathetics are quite lachrymose, for they make me laugh till the tears come. I am sure I don't

envy you, Mr. Blake, for I had rather think better of people and things than they really are, and be sometimes disappointed, than go about always wrapped up in the mantle of discontent, and see all the bright things of this world *en noir*."

"You are quite right, Lady Clara," said Mr. Gordon, "I wish you could laugh Blake out of his misanthrophy, do try."

"By the bye, Mr. Blake," said Lady Clara, "suppose you were to give us the history of this wretched life of your's, I am sure it would be most tender and pathetic; then, perhaps, I might cry outright, and this is just the party for such a narrative; come, begin, do, there's a good creature, we want something deeply interesting."

Mr. Blake shrugged his refusal.

"Well then," said Mr. Gordon, "if Blake will not tell his tale, and be the hero of it, I will for him. Let me see, Lady Clara, how ought one to begin? 'My first recollections,' will that do? 'were of my mother's dressing-room, where all my hours were passed amidst toys and tears; tired of every thing, and most of myself, then my tutor, and his horrid Latin accidence; at last I was sent to Eton, where, having always been taken

care of, I was not very able to take care of myself, so within a fortnight I broke my arm, and was sent home to be nursed, and my tender mother never after trusted me an hour from her sight, till I went to Christ Church ; there I got into as much mischief as a quiet lad could, and lived jollily ; and since I have been of age, I have done every thing I fancied, but my fancies have not turned out always agreeable, either at home or abroad ; only one thing I am certain of, that I have learnt to hate every human being, and detest every place and thing.’ ”

“ Hold ! hold ! Gordon,” cried Mr. Blake, “ you are over-doing it now, I am not quite so bad as you paint me.”

“ Well then,” said Mr. Gordon “ if I have outstripped the mark, take care to convince us I have done so, and I’ll retract any day with the greatest pleasure, but let us enquire for what those at the other end of the boat are sending forth such *grand éclats de rire*.”

CHAPTER V.

MR. DALLAS had been summoned to fill the place which Lord St. Leonard seemed determined not to return to, and this place was opposite to Miss O'Brian, who held Mr. Dallas in extreme aversion, and for this dislike we must account.

He was a rising young man, without family pretensions ; his father was an attorney in Dublin, but having been useful to successive Lord Lieutenants, and particularly versed in electioneering business, he had realized a large fortune, and without loss of character. He destined his son for a higher path, had educated him at Eton, and sent him to Oxford, at both places he was very popular ; at Eton as a famous *cricketer* and *boatman*, and up to any fun, and was always called

“an *excellent fellow!*” At Oxford he distinguished himself by taking a very good degree, and at *both* places formed a large acquaintance.

His father had determined him for the English bar, and flattered himself he had talents to win his way in an arduous profession, but he a good deal defeated his own purpose, by the ample allowance he gave his son, which enabled him to have rooms in the Albany as well as chambers in Lincoln’s Inn, at which last he did not spend a large portion of his time ; he had popular manners, was well looking, danced particularly well, sang a little, and was a small poet ; these talents for society made him asked every where, much to the detriment of his legal studies, but he proposed to himself another ladder for his ambition to mount by ; if he was not anxious to hear his own voice in Westminster Hall, he had an ardent desire to hear its sound in St. Stephen’s chapel.

Miss O’Brian had a nephew equal in abilities to Mr. Dallas, and with the advantages of family, which she so greatly appreciated, but the disabilities he had been under as a Catholic, were removed too late for him to overtake his successful rival ; who, besides, added popular manners, and was known in the world,

so that Mr. Terrence O'Brian had no chance of overtaking him.

Religious prejudice sours and narrows the mind, and unfortunately no boon granted to the Catholics can alter that feeling ; all they receive they consider as a *right long unjustly withheld*, and short, — far short of what they are entitled to.

In his new situation in the boat Mr. Dallas was placed opposite to Miss O'Brian, whom he immediately addressed by

“ Pray, Miss O'Brian, what have I done to offend you, that you gave me such a dead cut at Lady Allenham's the other night ? ”

“ I never meant to cut you,” replied Miss O'Brian, “ but you seemed so determined not to see me, I would not waste a bow on you, but I know why you so resolutely looked away, you were afraid that Mrs. Barton, or I, whom you saw was in distress for her carriage, should ask you to enquire for it. Oh, I know you young men of old.”

“ If we are young, how could you know us old ? ” said Mr. Dallas, “ that is something I should like to have explained.”

“ But you will not have that gratification,” replied

Miss O'Brian, "you tiresome quibbling lawyers take hold of every thing one says."

"I'll be judged by all present," said Mr. Dallas, "if there is any quibble in asking how you can have known a *young* man of *old*, unless, indeed, you mean a young man in 'older times,' though no one can look at you and imagine that."

"No quizzing if you please," said Miss O'Brian, rather in a tone of pique.

"Don't suspect me of such a thing," cried Mr. Dallas, "you know my devotion to you in life, and death,

'I do as is my duty,
Honour the shadow of your shoe tie.'

Don't frown on me, for that I cannot bear ! "

"You really," replied Miss O'Brian, "have the largest share of assurance I ever met with."

"That is rather severe," said Lord Frederic, "considering Mr. Dallas is of *our* country, perhaps he bathed in the Shannon before he was aware of the consequences; but *you*, at least, who are so warm a patriot, should pardon what is *national*."

"I believe you both take me for a fool, that you practice on me such absurd badinage."

"Oh my dear Juliet," said Lady Louisa, "don't

be angry at jokes in such a party as this, we must give, and take them, that is the zest of the thing."

"And are you really a Juliet?" exclaimed Mr. Dallas, and putting himself in a theatrical attitude,

'But soft, what light through yonder window breaks,
It is the east!—and Juliet is the sun!
Arise fair sun!

See she leans her cheek upon her hand,
O that I were a glove upon that hand
That I might touch that cheek!'"

It was impossible for any one, not even Lady Honiton, to refrain from laughter, at the very ridiculous way in which he did it. Miss O'Brian seemed half inclined to be affronted, but on Mr. Dallas saying,

"By the bye, sporting Shakspeare reminds me of a game I saw played lately in a large party, called 'Shakspeare illustrated,' and it was very good fun; a gentleman addressed any lady he chose in the words of some character, and if she answered by another quotation, she was entitled to call on a gentleman, naming the character she chose him to personate, he addressing another lady."

All were eager for this game, and insisted on Miss

O'Brian beginning by a reply to Mr. Dallas, which she did promptly in the words of Juliet :

‘ What devil art thou, that does thus torment me ? ’

All clapped and applauded, and she called on Lord Henry Mountjoy, as Malvolio, who, turning to Lady Louisa, said,

‘ Madam, you have done me wrong, notorious wrong,
I’ll be revenged on the whole pack of you.’

Lady Louisa replied,

‘ Fetch Malvolio hither,
And yet, alas, now I remember me, they say,
Poor gentleman, he’s much distract.’

Renewed peals of mirth followed this, and Lady Louisa applied to Mr. Blake as Jaques.

“ Oh,” cried Mr. Gordon, “ that’s capital, now Blake, be melancholy and gentlemanly.”

Mr. Blake shrugged his shoulders, and shook his head, “ he never remembered a line in his life, could not at school learn his Latin grammar.”

Mr. Gordon offered to prompt him, but he slipped off to the fore part of the boat.

“ Well,” said Lady Clara, “ if Mr. Blake will not speak for himself, you must personate him, and I shall address you as him.

‘ They say you are a melancholy fellow.’ ”

Mr. Gordon, imitating Mr. Blake’s voice and manner, replied

‘ I am so, I do love it better than laughing,
Why ’tis good to be sad, and say nothing.

And indeed the sundry contemplations of my travels, in which my after rumination wraps me, is a most humourous sadness.’ ”

To which Lady Clara replied,

“ ‘ A traveller ’ by my faith, you have reason to be sad. I fear you have sold your own lands to see other men’s. Then to have seen much, and have nothing, is to have rich eyes, and poor hands.’ ”

This game afforded much amusement, but we need not tire our readers by going through all who took part in it, especially as it did not reach to Lord St. Leonord’s turn.

Whilst this was proceeding, though Lord St. Leonord had escaped from what Lady Honiton wished to term *under her wing*, he had not eluded her observation ; and as they were passing Greenwich, she saw him in deep consultation with his servant ; and a boat hailed, she exclaimed,

“ I hope we are not going to stop at Greenwich,

that I really cannot allow, do Lord Frederic be so very kind to find out what all this is about."

But whilst this was saying, the boat made for the shore with only Lord St. Leonard's servant.

"Oh," said Lord Frederic, "you need have no alarms, St. Leonard is, I dare say, only sending for some cigars, which Greenwich is famous for, you see it is only his servant that is gone."

"If that is all, I don't care," said Lady Honiton, "for I feel sure Lord St. Leonard is too well bred to use them in our society."

The Shakspearian game lasted till the party reached Erith; just as they were all disembarked, a small sailing-boat shot past them a few yards, and two smart looking men jumped out; Lady Honiton applying her glass, and turning round to see who was near her, said,

"Do, Colonel Blackburn, pray enquire who those persons are that have just landed, I really can allow no intruders into our party."

Colonel Blackburn went in quest of information, and returned laughing, and assured Lady Honiton she need be under no apprehension of intruders, for he found the *gentlemen* very busy unpacking plates and

bottles, they were some of Lord St. Leonard's people.

This perfectly satisfied her, and she was much gratified at hearing that the owner of Belvedere had provided a marquée and table for her party to dine, and sent a message to inform her that a Swiss cottage in the grounds was prepared for any cooking her party might require; she therefore in tolerable humour joined one of the strolling parties in this lovely domain, whilst dinner was preparing. It was soon announced; and when they were all seated at the table, great was her surprise and delight, at two dishes of white bait, dressed in the utmost perfection, being placed on the table; it was discovered that this was the mission to Greenwich, that Lord St. Leonard had sent his servant on, fish and cook were brought together from the Inn. Nothing could be more flattering, or guarded, than Lady Honiton's acknowledgments of this attention, and those of Lady Adelaide's for this *galanterie*, were expressed in such vivid terms that Mr. Dallas said,

“ Really, Lady-Adelaide, I did not know you had such an Aldermanic taste, and was so immoderately fond of white bait.”

"Oh dear, I assure you I have no Alderman Gourmand taste about it, but it was so very good natured and attentive in Lord St. Leonard, we cannot say enough about it."

At this moment his lordship's attention was attracted by the mention of his name.

"You are really a happy man, my lord," said Mr. Dallas, "though, indeed, you are always entitled to be such; I had no idea of all the virtues of white bait, I thought it was merely eaten by Lord Mayors and city gastronoms, or used to catch some certain sorts of fish, but I see it might be used to catch Venus herself; I think from henceforth its name should be changed to *Fair Lady Bait*."

Lady Adelaide coloured, not celestial rosy red, but an angry red.

Lady Honiton, who even still better comprehended the force of the satire, at the same moment that she could not repress an angry look at Mr. Dallas, turned immediately with her blindest smile to Lord St. Leonard, and said,

"Really, those quibbling lawyers, as Miss O'Brian calls them, are so ridiculous, one cannot help laughing at them," for Lord St. Leonard was laughing immoderately.

“ Oh,” cried he, “ I have been thinking how charming to have a new dish, or rather a new name for an old dish, I wonder what Le Noir would make of the name, he would call it *crochet des dames*.”

“ No, no !” exclaimed all the ladies at once, “ that is quite a libel on us, is it not, Mr. Dallas ?” said Lady Louisa, “ for you must understand the law of libels.”

“ Indeed, I think it is,” replied he, “ in every sense, for the *bait* is not the *hook*, that is carefully concealed *under* it, the poor unhappy fish only thinks he is swallowing a fly, or a worm, and he is *attrappée* ; but I go no farther than *fish*, I can’t pretend to say how far fair ladies are aware, either of the hook, or the bait held out to them, or those they hold out.”

“ You are the most provoking creature in the world,” cried Miss Williams, “ you always leave a thing worse than you find it.”

“ Well then,” replied Mr. Dallas, “ in future, ladies must interpret for themselves, and not call on one of my profession, whose trade it is to sift every thing to the bottom, and find not only the ‘ *malice prepense*,’ but the *overt act* of laying baits, fixing hooks, and taking hearts.”

A pic nic dinner is soon over, and the hampers of champagne attending it, soon emptied. The ladies walked in the grounds, and drank their coffee, enjoying the beautiful view of the Thames.

They were soon joined by the gentlemen, and then, in small parties, rambled about the grounds till the setting sun admonished them to depart. They embarked, and for some time had the tide in their favour. Such parties generally grow gayer as they grow older, and duets, glees and charades, lent wings to time, but the evening closing, the boatmen proposed going through the canal belonging to the West India docks, to avoid going round the Isle of Dogs.

It is impossible not to feel a little damp on being shut up in a lock, the singing ceased, and nobody had a riddle to bring forward. Lady Honiton took the opportunity of saying that "she meant to have an Archery meeting at Inglewood on the 8th of August, and hoped whoever of that party were going northward for grouse-shooting, would not forget that the Forest was in their way."

Several of the gentlemen most readily promised—a promise is soon made, and easily broken, if a more agreeable engagement offers. But Lady Honiton was delighted at Lord St. Leonard saying,

“Oh, that will just suit me, Faulkner and I have hired a moor, and I shall certainly take you on my way,” and, after a moment’s thought, said, “shall I bring Le Noir? he must go down with me, and you may have his clarionet in your own wood if you like it, Lady Adelaide?”

“Oh,” cried she, “that would be charming! you really are too kind, Lord St. Leonard,” and she repeated her own, and her mother’s obligations so often, that Lady Honiton thought it advisable to check this effusion of gratitude, by saying,

“We shall be infinitely obliged to you, but I beg, my Lord, you will not let us interfere with any future arrangement you may make, or in the least degree inconvenience you.”

“Oh,” replied he, “you will not inconvenience me, for I must send Le Noir down with the keepers, and the dogs; so he may as well stop at Inglewood, though I fear I cannot offer you the rest of his band, for in fact I do not know which of my people he has enlisted in it; but you, Lady Adelaide, must take him under your command, and direct where he is to play.”

After a little pause, “You are an archer?” said

Lord St. Leonard to Lady Adelaide, "every one ought to know that, and you shoot with an unerring dart, I dare say."

Lady Adelaide bowed her thanks.

"By the bye," said he, "there is something said somewhere about unerring darts, I can't recollect where or what, you Dallas, who know all those sort of things, do tell me."

"I do not, at this moment, recollect," said Mr. Dallas, "the thing your lordship means, I know, 'Cupid god of fiery darts,' but that will not suit Lady Adelaide, her's are gentle darts, however deep they may wound, all I can recollect is the song of the Tailor and the Crow, but he shot with an *erring* dart, and shot his old sow through the heart."

"Oh, cried Lord St. Leonard, that is not at all what I meant, though I never shall forget Liston singing that song, when I met him one day at Talbot's lodgings," St. Leonard went off with such a tirade about Liston and his songs, as fairly drove all the civil things he meant to say to Lady Adelaide out of his head. Lady Honiton turned her head from her daughter, rejoicing in her heart, that *her Lord* had not heard this confirmation of his opinion of Lord St. Leonard's want of

intellect or tact, and she rather trusted it was not at all what he meant, only a concatenation of ideas that came across him.

All the rest was charming and flattering, and went well to the landing. It was as dark as a July evening could be, for the moon was only just rising, and throwing false shadows.

In getting out of the boat, what had been wickedly intended at getting in, really, and accidentally took place; for Miss O'Brian's foot slipped, and went into the water: she made as much as she possibly could of the accident, and, though really only one foot was wetted, lamented over herself: at last, having got it partly dried in a neighbouring house, and declaring it was impossible she could go to Mrs. Gordon's, it was arranged that Mrs. Murray Williams should set her down in Green-street, as she was going to take her eldest daughter home, who was out of health, and rather fatigued. Lady Honiton begged her to set down Lady Clara also; as she was going on a journey the next day, she must go to rest early, and offered to take care of Miss Fanny Williams till her mother returned.

Mrs. Gordon filled her barouche inside and out,

with Sir Henry Littledale, Colonel Neville, Colonel Blackburn; and Mr. Dallas, others had gigs, and Lord St. Leonard his phaeton, in which he gave Lord Frederic a place, and was driving off, when Mr. Gordon, who had been engaged talking to the people belonging to the barge, called out,

“Do, St. Leonard, put down one of your servants, and take me up, for I am cast away!”

This request was readily complied with, and they drove off, but passing the end of Vauxhall bridge, Lord St. Leonard said,

“Suppose we go to Vauxhall instead of your wife’s supper?”

“Oh, no!” cried both Lord Frederic and Mr. Gordon, “that will never do,” and the horses, which had been checked, went on; but arrived at the end of Piccadilly, instead of turning up Park Lane, Lord St. Leonard drove past the new gateway.

“Where the devil are you going?” cried Mr. Gordon, “this is not the way to Seymour Place!”

“I know that,” said Lord St. Leonard, “but my horses are so fresh I am only going to breathe them, and take a turn down Grosvenor Place, we shall be at your house before the others;” the turn extended round

Belgrave Square, but he was nearly right as to the time of arrival.

The diminished party assembled at supper looked as if they had already had enough of the fatigue of pleasure. The conversation reverting to Miss O'Brian's accident, Mrs. Gordon said,

"Really, I am not sorry we have got rid of her, for though she is your friend, Lady Honiton, I must say, she is the most tiresome and annoying person I know."

"Indeed," said Lady Honiton, "I think you are too hard upon my poor cousin; for there is not a better creature, or a kinder heart breathing."

"Oh, I don't doubt that," said Mrs. Gordon, "but she is so dreadfully indefatigable in all she does, she never takes a refusal, and she has such loads of horrid twentieth cousins to force on one: I remember how she tormented me to ask one of these creatures, whom, she said, ought to be King of Munster. I am sure when I saw him, he was quite fit to be King of Bedlam. But she had so tormented me, that one unlucky day, having fixed a party, without knowing there was to be a grand review at Hounslow, and an immense officer dinner given to the Duke of Cumberland,

fancying I should not have a man of my party, I gave her a card for this soi-disant king. Oh ! I never shall forget him ! he came fresh from the review, I don't think he had washed the dust off his face, and he had not been in my rooms five minutes, when all crowded round him : he raved like a madman, described all the quarrels he had on the ground with people who unavoidably pushed up against him, and declared he had at least six duels to fight before breakfast next day, and at last darted off like a sky-rocket, to find seconds." The company laughed at this description.

"I dare say I can name the man," said Mr. Dallas, "Terrence Mac Dermot."

"Oh," replied Mrs. Gordon, "I believe he had some such detestable name."

"You have not much outré'd him," said Mr. Dallas, "I believe he has fought twenty duels in his life ; it is quite like eating his breakfast, a thing of course, he piques himself on having the best pistols in Europe, and best knowing how to use them. He is the man who fought O'Leary, because the latter allowed that Ireland was behind England in civilization, and as O'Leary was a short slender man, and Mac Dermot six feet four, and broad in proportion, he insisted on

the size of his adversary being chalked out on him, and no hit to go for anything that was not within that mark."

"I remember something of the sort," replied Lord Frederic, "but forget how it ended."

"Why," replied Mr. Dallas, "Mac Dermot was wounded in the left shoulder, but it was outside the mark; and he took off the curl of his antagonist, and just singed his ear: so he gained the day, though he was laid up several months after with his wound."

The exhausted party separated, and when seated in the carriage, Lady Adelaide exclaimed,

"Well, my dear mamma, you must be satisfied now; I am sure it was a most charming and successful day."

"I am glad you think so, Adelaide," was Lady Honiton's cool reply.

Lady Louisa only remarked, "I think it went off very well, the weather was charming."

The trio were then silent till they reached home, and separated for the night. Lady Honiton asked if her Lord was gone to bed, and, hearing that he was still writing in his library, went in to him, and, in answer to his question, if they had had a pleasant day?

expressed herself perfectly satisfied, and after receiving his injunctions, that they should follow him as soon as possible, and, being told that it would be out of the question their setting off on Tuesday, he good-humouredly acquiesced in its being early on Wednesday.

Lady Honiton did not retire to rest so perfectly satisfied with the day as Lady Adelaide. Youth is sanguine, and seldom doubts what it hopes; but her more sagacious mother, putting every thing together on her pillow, felt the result was still very doubtful: there was little progress, if any, but nothing decidedly retrograde, and the breakfast at Richmond was still to come. It is not possible to tell when the spark will ignite the train.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN seated the next day at her breakfast table, Lady Honiton sent a servant to enquire after Miss O'Brian; the answer was returned by the lady in person.

"Well, Juliet, how are you?" all exclaimed at the same moment.

"You must ask my shoes how they do, for they are the greatest sufferers, and they were quite a new pair."

"Oh, never mind your shoes," cried Lady Louisa, "we will all subscribe to give you others."

Though Miss O'Brian declared she had breakfasted, yet her consumption of tea and muffin rather contradicted the assertion. When breakfast was over,

the young ladies went to their apartment, and Lady Honiton with her confidante to her own boudoir.

“I wish you joy, Lady Honiton, of the success of your water-party, nothing could be more perfect, excepting my *malheur*, and no one cared for *me*,—are you not quite in spirits?”

“I wish I was,” replied Lady Honiton, “but I see nothing to build any decided hopes on.”

“Oh, was not Lord St. Leonard all attention to Lady Adelaide?”

“Only,” said Lady Honiton, “when he was wedged in between us, he made his escape when he could, and never returned to us again.”

“But,” said Miss O’Brian, “he was so attentive in sending after the white bait, and so delighted that Lady Adelaide liked it.”

“That is true, but did you not mark his decided declaration that he did not intend to marry.”

“His declarations go for nothing with me,” said Miss O’Brian, “he *says* one thing, and always *does* the reverse, that is his character.”

“Rather an uncertain one, if it be so.”

“But you know,” said Miss O’Brian, “he promised to come to Inglewood, for your archery meeting.”

"And, according to your position," said Lady Honiton, "that is no rule that he will come, rather to the contrary; but there is still his breakfast at Richmond, and he must be *there*, so I must hope on. Now do tell me, did you remark any thing between Louisa and Colonel Neville, for the fear of that quite distracts me?"

"Oh no, nothing in the world but their usual intimacy, you know they have been great friends ever since Lady Louisa was a baby."

"That does not insure their not being lovers now she is older, but I cling to hope, though in a contrary direction from the other."

"Now tell me," said Miss O'Brian, "why you fixed the eighth of August for your archery meeting? I thought you were to wait for Lord Ottery do you know when to expect him?"

"I wish I did," replied Lady Honiton, "but there was no leaving the thing indefinite, and if no day was fixed, every one would be engaged, so I risked it, as the most likely time to catch the grouse shooters, and I must reconcile my lord as well as I can, if Frederic should not be returned; later in the year would not do at all."

"One is certain of nothing in this world, more especially where a young man is concerned; as to Frederic, I own I am far from easy about him, his letters are so vague, he *is* coming, and he is *not* coming,—he *is* ill, and he is *not* ill,—I much fear there is some abominable attachment in the case, there is nothing makes a young man so uncontrollable as an ill-placed attachment."

"Have you any other reason for this surmise?" replied Miss O'Brien.

"None but what I have named," said Lady Honiton.

"No person to fix on?" asked Miss O'Brien.

"None in the world."

"Why, my dear Lady Honiton, don't you remember a foreign girl, the year Lady Adelaide came out, that Lord Ottery was so attentive to at Almack's?"

"No, indeed I do not, but I cannot think," replied Lady Honiton, "that Frederic would fall sincerely in love with any trumpery foreign adventurer."

"Oh, I assure you," said Miss O'Brien, "she was no adventurer, she was brought out by Lady Gertude Mahon, who is propriety itself, and as a German Countess, and a great heiress, but she disappeared, no one knew why, nor where."

“I have no recollection of the circumstance, when was it?”

“The first year Lady Adelaide came out, and I do not wonder, in her *éclat*, and your anxiety, that you heeded no other person.”

“Her coming out was *éclat* indeed!” said Lady Honiton, “how few make such a sensation! I own it did engross me to the exclusion of every other thought. And how extraordinary that she has not yet made a brilliant marriage!”

“Oh,” said Miss O’Brian, “that is often the case with girls that are so much admired, I know a hundred instances—Lady Katherine Gower, Miss Faulkland, and fifty more I could name; the fact is, they are so captivated with the admiration they get, that unless they are persuaded to take some *bon parté* before they have thoroughly felt their own powers, they cannot bear to relinquish the joys of flirting.”

“I do think the flirting system destroys more marriages than any thing; and quadrilles don’t help them. In our time things were better managed, when country dances gave so much opportunity for conversation.”

“You ought to have said flirting, for it amounts to the same thing,” replied Lady Honiton, “but you are

quite an oracle this morning; however, you may be right, some cause there is, why young women, and young men too, are less controllable than they used to be, for I am sure I know this to my cost. But, upon recollection, I do now remember something about the girl you mention, her name was Rosen — something —."

"Rosenburg, and she was a countess," said Miss O'Brian.

"But," said Lady Honiton, "I never saw any thing like attention in Ottery to her, that must be a chimera of your's, Juliet; and if she did disappear, there is not much reason to fear they have met again. It all now comes quite before me, good Lady Gertrude, as round as a pincushion, and as quiet as one, taking up half a sofa, I think the girl was always walked about, and partnered by Mrs. Douglas."

"I have always wondered," said Miss O'Brian, "why Mrs. Douglas, with two daughters of her own, who it must be confessed are very handsome, should always so readily take other girls under her care."

"There are generally good and substantial reasons for out-of-the-way things. Mrs. Douglas thinks no girls can come near her own, they are more likely to be

foils ; and then you know, that though *her* high connexions, and *their* beauty, get her asked every where, she has no establishment, not even a carriage, only a lodging ; so the use of a carriage &c., makes it answer to her, she always knows what she is about, I wish I was as well able to trail up and down the rooms as she does ; and then I might learn of her, which side has the best man, and how to manœuvre a partner when a girl looks a little glum for want of one."

"That is not an evil likely to occur in your family at least," said Miss O'Brian.

"But, replied Lady Honiton," we have only been talking of my affairs, and they are not happy just at this moment, now let us have *your's* on the tapis."

"Mine!"

"Yes, I have a most charming scheme in my head for you ; but first let me say that I *had* cast my eye on Sir Henry Littledale for you, but I saw he was looking towards Emma Williams, but I have something capital in store for you. Don't look so dismal, my dear, it will do, I will *make* it do. I mean that you should marry General Clayton."

"He ! he ! he ! ha ! ha ! ha ! excellent, indeed !"

"You may laugh, but, I have arranged it all in my

own mind. You must contrive to get to us, for our Archery meeting, or soon after it, the last will perhaps be the best, the General always pays us a visit at Inglewood, and I mean he should have a fit of the gout then, and *you* shall nurse him."

"Oh heavens, what can you mean?"

"I don't mean that you should smooth his pillows, or give him his gruel, but when he is recovering you shall read the papers to him, play at chess or backgammon, and it must be your own fault if you do not touch his heart, it really is a very open, good one."

"But how are you to get up this fit of gout?"

"Nothing so easy, I will find out what particular dish, Mullagatawny soup, or what else, gives him it, and I will take care he is often tempted: I am sure there is gout enough in all Williams's dishes, only the disease is almost worn out in these happy temperate days."

"Well, Lady Honiton, but you have chosen an unlucky time for my powers of attraction, for the gout is said, to put those who have it, most dreadfully out of temper."

"That, my dear," said Lady Honiton, "is only when it is in its first violence, then you will have no-

thing to do with him. Believe me, men are never so tender and tractable as when they have been reduced by a dangerous, and painful disease. I can do any thing with my Lord when he has had an attack of lumbago, he thinks he never can be grateful enough for my attentions."

"But your dear Lord is always excellence itself."

"And," replied Lady Honiton, "his friend General Clayton is a very good man, or he would not be his friend."

"Well, but what will Colonel Neville and Mrs. Denison say to such a scheme? Of all things in the world, they would least like the General's marrying."

"That is very true, but, when old men (I beg pardon, middle aged gentlemen,) have got marrying into their heads, nephews and nieces go for nothing, and they would find you less objectionable than a mere girl, which they are generally the most ready to choose: but, on this occasion, *your* success would be most particularly desirable to *me*, after the advantage to yourself, which I assure you is my *first* inducement to forward the thing. I think the General's marriage would put Col. Neville's expectations so far off. it would be impossible he

could think of Louisa, and as to Mrs. Denison, we must manage her as well as we can; for decency's sake, I shall ask her to Inglewood whilst the General is there, but not till matters are too far gone for him to retract, and you know she has always a sick baby or a coming baby to keep her at home. Do, my dear Juliet, go home and ponder over all this, and remember to have plenty of becoming caps and pretty gowns, and look your best."

"Alas! Lady Honiton, my purse is too exhausted for me to add to my wardrobe."

"Never mind, vamp up the old ones; men are no judges whether a thing is new or old; if it looks gay, you know, without flattery, that, when you look your best, you might pass for thirty."

"But, dear Lady Honiton, there may be another, and, as I have often experienced a *fatal* bar, you know how my dear Church is reviled in the country."

"Have no fears, the General has lived so much in Pagan countries; he is very tolerant—and pardon me, in your case, the stipulations need not extend beyond yourself; there is no doubt they will be allowed so far."

At this moment Mr. Dallas was announced ; he came, he said, to enquire after Lady Honiton, as she complained of head-ache last night, and said he was on his way to ask how Miss O'Brian did, after her accident.

This she did not give credit to, though he begged to prove it, by offering her his arm, and escort to her own door, if she was going home : she was not, and declined his offer, and went up to the young ladies.

Lady Honiton employed Mr. Dallas to arrange with Mr. Gordon the expenses of the boat and music, and to settle the whole thing, and then said,

“ If you have no engagement, and will take your chance of dinner, or no dinner ; for I am sure I have no idea whether Williams has left us any ; I shall be glad to see you, we dine at six, a horrid gothic hour ; but the girls wish to go to Kensington Gardens in the evening, when it is cool, and you may be our

Mr. Dallas most readily accepted the invitation, and went on his mission to Mr. Gordon.

Some time after, Miss O'Brian came down from Lady Adelaide ; and Lady Honiton gave her the same invitation she had given Mr. Dallas, adding,

"It is your only chance of seeing us, for we are going out of town."

"Out of town!" exclaimed Miss O'Brian, "what not stay for the breakfast?"

"Oh, we shall return for that, we are not going far; but St. Leonard is gone into Yorkshire for some horse race, I believe, and we have nothing to do, and no place to admit any one in, the rooms are all so dismantled, and the girls, particularly Adelaide, look pale from the heat of the London season, so I am going to Coomb, near Blackheath, for a few days; I have long promised poor Caroline to go and see her, and the glimpse of her house on our water party, reminded me of that promise; and a little fresh air will do us good, and improve Adelaide's complexion for the Richmond party."

"What a *triste sejour* it will be," said Miss O'Brian, "for I hear Lady Caroline's spirits are worse than ever."

"The girls must take their chance of that," replied Lady Moniton, "they will have her pretty boy for a plaything, and they must take their sketch books and guitars, it cannot be duller than Inglewood, when we have no company; they can get there easily on the

water, and something may turn up when we least expect it."

Miss O'Brian was engaged to dine with Mrs. Barton, and go with her afterwards to Lee and Kennedy's, to choose some plants, but she recollected that Mrs. Barton went every evening, for an hour, to her daughter, who was confined, and if she would drop her in her way to Brook-street, and take her up, she could yet have an hour, a last hour, with Lady Honiton.

"How I wish," she cried, "that you had not got that odious Dallas, what can make you so fond of him?"

"And what can make you so dislike him?" replied Lady Honiton.

"I dislike him," cried Miss O'Brian, "because he always comes across poor Terrence in all his professional employments."

"And I patronize him," said Lady Honiton, "because his father saved my unfortunate father from ruin: if it had not been for old Dallas, Lord Tipperary must have been an exile from his country, and perhaps have sold every acre of land he possessed there; no one could behave better than old Dallas did, and in

return he asked me to notice his son : I have done so, and have had no reason to repent my promise, for I have always found him civil, obliging, and useful, and, really considering the notice he receives, *humble*."

"I am glad you find him so," said Miss O'Brian.
"Adieu *au revoir*."

Mr. Dallas settled the boat business admirably, and Lady Honiton found him so knowing in archery, having been at several of the great meetings in Cheshire, that when he took leave of them at their own door, after Kensington Gardens, as he had an engagement, it was arranged that he should get some bows and arrows from Larner's the next day, and write to Cheatham Hill for a further supply ; and come to them for an hour, before they set off for Coomb, and make them a little *au fait* to attitudes, &c., and they could practice before they returned to town.

Miss O'Brian only came in for one moment whilst Mrs. Barton waited at the door.

The following morning Mr. Dallas gave the promised lesson, and as every house in the square, on that side, was empty, they practised in the garden, and it would be a capital amusement where they were going.

Lady Honiton's words proved true, as to something

turning up, for on Black Heath one of her horses picked up a stone, and it baffled the efforts of the coachman and footman to get it out; they were obliged therefore to wait till a blacksmith was fetched; whilst waiting, an artillery officer and a lady came up in a phaeton, the former very civilly asked if any accident had happened, and offered his services. Lady Honiton thanked him very graciously; and in doing so, discovered an old acquaintance, Sir Everard Gilbert, who had been *aide de camp* to the late Lord Honiton, when Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and often her partner in days of youth and beauty; they were mutually glad to meet again; he was commandant at Woolwich, and offered to show the lions of the Arsenal to the ladies. Lady Honiton doubted, with a lame horse, the possibility of accepting this offer, but Sir Everard obviated that, by proposing to fetch them from the place she said they were going to, in his barge, this was joyfully accepted.

They reached their destination, and found Lady Caroline and her little boy ready to receive them. She had married most happily to Colonel Mac Mahon, who unfortunately fell in a duel with his most intimate friend; she knew nothing of the quarrel, her husband

left her early in the morning, and looking out at her window whilst dressing, she saw him borne home a corpse; its effect may be more easily imagined than described; her only wish was to leave the scene of her misery, and the offer of a friend, who had a small cottage on the banks of the Thames, and was going abroad for two years, induced her to remove there, and endeavour to forget the happiness, as well as the misery, of the past. She had one little boy three years old, an amusing plaything for Lady Adelaide and her sister.

The beautiful view of the Thames from the house and gardens, and a fleet of Indiamen passing, was delightful.

Next day Sir Everard Gilbert came, according to his promise, and escorted them over all the really interesting establishment at Woolwich, and brought them back by water; they were so enchanted with their little voyage, that he said,

“There was to be a launch on Saturday, and hoped to be allowed to fetch them again for that, as His Royal Highness the Duke of C***** was expected to name the ship, and afterwards to inspect Captain Parry’s ship, prepared for a voyage to the North Pole.”

What a transition from the Opera and Almacks, to dock yards and arsenals ! but novelty has charms ! The invitation was accepted ; and the intervening day spent in practising archery according to Mr. Dallas' instruction ; and no one enjoyed the amusement more than the little boy, who ran to fetch the discharged arrows.

Lady Louisa made some pretty sketches of shipping, to be finished when she returned to Inglewood. The launch was magnificent, and the breakfast on board the Heckla very pleasant ; these Lady Honiton met another old acquaintance in the Governor of Greenwich Hospital, he too was anxious to shew his lions, and Lady Honiton and her daughters proposed to go next day to attend the service at the Hospital Chapel, and see the establishment afterwards ; in the evening they returned to town, leaving Lady Caroline better for society and exertion.

CHAPTER VII.

THERE is not much to fear from weather in July; even in this fickle climate, and it had been so invariably fine for several weeks, that the sun rose cloudless on this important day, without having excited many previous hopes or fears.

Lady Honiton and her daughters set off for Richmond before two o'clock. Soon after they were seated in the carriage, Lady Honiton said,

“ Well, Adelaide, you certainly look the better for your *sejour* at Coomb. I never saw you more in beauty, and I think your hats become you both extremely, so I do not regret their extravagant price, as I feel sure there will be nothing like them ; they are so

simple, so *paysanne* ; I rather think I like those very simple wild flowers in your's, Adelaide, better than the vine and grapes in Louisa's, though Herbault thinks that the most perfect, as they are vine-dressers' hats."

'They were soon passed on the road by the young Duchess of Dartmoor, who kissed her hand to them.

"How lovely the Duchess looks to-day," said Lady Adelaide, "that charming hat, *couleur de rose*, and her carriage lined with the same tint, sets off her delicate pale complexion."

"I do not like her hat for the occasion so well as your's," said Lady Honiton, "though I dare say it came from the same *artiste*, but with her all is *couleur de rose*."

"Pardon me, my dear mother," said Lady Louisa, "that is not so certain, for she seems already a deserted wife, and, to my mind, the gaiety she puts on, which does not belong to her character, is a proof she has a aching heart."

"You have the most extraordinary and absurdly romantic notions, Louisa," replied Lady Honiton, "I ever met with in a well educated girl; I wonder where you get them, not from old Mercier, I am sure, she had no romance about her. But how do you know that the dear Duchess is a deserted wife?"

“ Because every body says so, mamma, for the Duke is never with her.”

“ I dare say he rides down to Richmond to day, men hate a carriage in a morning,” said Lady Honiton.

“ Or drives down Madame Vestris,” replied Lady Louisa.

“ My dear Louisa, you are quite scandalous, and should not accustom yourself to say those things ; they are not observations for a young woman to make ; there are many occasions when it is best to shut one’s eyes, and one’s ears too, and this is one of them. I only wish *your* mother had as much tact as the Duchess’s had, it would be better for you all ; but you cannot suppose Lord St. Leonard would invite such company as an Opera singer.”

“ Oh, I know that Vestris is to be there, for Lord St. Leonard told me so ; there is to be some *scena* got up with her, Pasta, Sontag, and Velluti, and they all refused to go there merely to sing their songs and go away ; so, I believe, as Lady Harriet was determined not to be disappointed of her *scena*, they are to be first *professional*, and then *company* ; and I dare say there will be plenty of people besides that one cannot notice.”

“That is very likely,” said Lady Honiton, “there always must be at such assemblages, especially when they are bachelor’s parties; the worst of it is, that those sort of women draw off young men from those they ought to attend to.”

By this time they had arrived within sight of the Kings’-road turnpike, but the string of carriages was so great, they were entirely stopped, and with little chance of moving beyond a foot’s pace for half an hour. Whilst waiting here, a gig drove up with Colonel and Lady Isabella Gore, great greetings passed, and Lady Honiton asked Lady Isabella, “why she did not go down with the Duchess of Dartmoor, as she was alone, for she must be smothered with dust.”

“Oh,” said she, “I like much better to go with Gore, I never mind dust.”

“I wanted her to go with her sister,” said Colonel Gore, “but she was obstinate.”

“You might find a word better adapted to the action, and not very different in sound,” said Lady Louisa.

Colonel Gore laughed, saying,

“We shall not get on these two hours by staying here, and as my horse does not much relish standing still, I shall try and explore a lane I see, which I think

must take us into some other road to Richmond." As they drove off, Lady Louisa said,

"I wonder which of those sisters is most to be envied ! not the Duchess, I am sure."

As this observation was made, Col. Neville and one or two other men, rode up to the side of the carriage : Lady Louisa coloured from the fear her remark had been overheard, and, at the same time, received a reproving look from her mother.

Immediately afterwards, a curricie drove past on the other side, with the Duke of Dartmoor and alady. Seeing the stoppage, he pulled up, asked one of the servants what occasioned it, if there was a road to Richmond the way the gig was going, and whose it was ? these questions being answered, instead of following the gig, when he heard who was in it, he turned his horses towards London, saying,

"We will go Hammersmith way, that must be open."

Lady Honiton's attention being engaged, she did not see who was in the curricie, and, asking Col. Neville, was told the Duke of Dartmoor and Madame Vestris !

Lady Louisa was almost too deeply engaged, even

to steal a look at her mother, but a glance shewed her that Lady Honiton looked disconcerted and displeased ; perhaps she might have guessed the cause of one as well as the other. No material impediment occurred in the rest of their drive ; it was slow, and the setting down still slower, so that it was four o'clock before they arrived at the door.

It is asserted by moralists, that anticipated pleasures are seldom realized, and it may, with equal truth, be affirmed, that of the professed votaries of pleasure, half of them have aching hearts hid under cheerful smiles, and gay pursuits ; inwardly eschewing bitter mortifications.

Perhaps of those who suffer most under this vexation, are calculating mothers, who have laid sagacious plans, made severe sacrifices, risked health, nay, almost the respectability of the maternal character, to carry a favourite point, to procure a brilliant match for a daughter. For this, heirs are pursued with unremitting assiduity, single men of all ages, with large fortunes, courted and flattered. Other mothers circumvented by the most artful manœuvring, a system of deception practised, and gloried in, which the mothers of former generation would have shuddered at. And, when

the desired object is attained, how often does it end in the misery of the victim, who gains a splendid establishment at the expense of a breaking heart. If she has good principles enough to resist the temptations with which she is surrounded, her destiny is, perhaps, an early grave ; but too often she consoles herself by following the wishes of her heart, and forgets the reluctant, yet solemn, engagement she has made, to love one whom she in reality detests, and who too often neglects her, when she flies to the arms of another : and what does she gain ? Disgrace ! bitter contempt, and generally neglect also ! for it is one of the weaknesses of human nature to despise what is easily attained ; and a woman is always loved the more, the more steadily she resists the temptation which is offered to seduce her from her duties.

What have not calculating mothers to answer for ! And what do they not lay up for themselves as well as their daughters, though modern philosophy has invalidated some of the maxims of Solomon, it has not yet proved that, ‘ vexation of spirit ’ is not the constant follower of vanity.

Lady Honiton and her daughter were received by Lady Harriet Egerton, the presiding Goddess of the

fête, and were soon joined by Lord St. Leonard. Nothing could be prettier than the whole thing, or arranged in better taste.

A covered way from the gate to the house was a *berceau* of orange trees and roses, and at the door stood two fantastically dressed pages like the Genii of the place.

The gardens, which were hanging on the side of Richmond-hill, were covered with tents, some Ottoman, some Persian, all various and picturesque as to their disposal. A sort of tunnel under a public road led to the part of the garden more immediately on the Thames, this entrance was also filled with plants and perfume; from this tunnel to the water was left for a promenade, the river was sparkling with the beams of a bright sun, and covered with innumerable gay boats of every description, mostly filled with spectators, who crowded also the opposite shore; there were also boats provided for those who liked the water, there was constant embarking and landing, as many parties came by water.

In one part of the grounds a sort of vista had been most ingeniously converted by Stanfield into mountain scenery at a distance, a few fine trees form-

ing a natural foreground, and giving almost *reality* to the deception ; here the Tyroleze singers were placed, in imagination almost amongst their own native mountains.

At another point was an arbour and *trellise* with flying cupids scattering roses, so admirably executed the flowers seemed dropping on the heads of those who entered—here Vestris, Pasta, Sontag, and Velluti performed their *scena*—but before that took place, a great sensation was made by the arrival of a beautiful stranger, attention was immediately attracted, and who is she ? from whence does she come ? and what a lovely creature ! who ever saw such a complexion ? was buzzed about. These exclamations had not reached Lady Honiton, who was in the lower garden, talking to a highly distinguished artist, whose gentlemanly manners, and various talents, were a passport into the first society. The moment he saw the young lady in question, as she came through the subterraneous arch, he exclaimed,

“ Who can that lovely creature be ! I never before saw such angelic living beauty ! ”

“ Oh ! ” replied Lady Honiton, “ there are quantities of people here one never heard of, nor saw before. All the birds of the air collect at such a fête as this, I

dare say some obscure nobody ; to be sure *your* word is a certificate for *beauty*, but I declare she only seems to *me* to be a sort of milk maid, cherry cheeked damsel, with no air or fashion about her, rather plebeian I should say."

"It is the air of youth and beauty," replied the artist, "your Ladyship is not near enough to see the delicacy of her features, or the perfect symmetry of her sylph-like figure."

Lady Honiton had no wish to see such charms but in her own daughters, and therefore shewed no inclination to move on. Lord Henry Mountjoy passing, she said,

"Do tell me who that girl is that people are running so after?"

"She is a Miss Trevallion, old Lady Glen Williams' grand-daughter ; her mother was a great beauty, and she seems to have transmitted it," he replied.

During this enquiry the artist had followed to get a nearer view of her youth and loveliness.

Lady Honiton exclaimed, "How people run after new faces ; I dare say if I had dressed up a pretty housemaid I have, and brought her here, a crowd would have followed her. I don't believe men are the best judges

of what is high bred, excepting in their horses and dogs."

Poor Lady Honiton, when summoned by Lord St. Leonard, who went round the gardens to announce that the singing was beginning, had hardly resolution to go where her own daughters would be, as she thought, so undeservedly eclipsed; it was in her mind quite as presumptuous and abominable of Miss Trevallion, the daughter of a Devonshire 'squire, to eclipse *her* daughters, as it was for the moon, as she sometimes does, to darken the sun.

The scene fully answered her expectation, and the performers in it were congratulated on their success, shaken hands with, and noticed as if they had been princesses of the land, not of the stage. After this, all moved to breakfast. Lady Honiton and her daughters were, of course, conducted to a marquée prepared for royalty,—though royalty was wanting.

When all were seated, and Lady Honiton had congratulated herself on being among the privileged and exclusives, Lord St. Leonard came to beg a place might be found for Lady Glen William, and of course for her protégée - room was quickly found opposite Lady Honiton and her daughters,—to come so in contact and opposition was not agreeable; but how-

ever Lady Honiton might feel it, her daughters were satisfied with their cortége of beaux. Lord St. Leonard came frequently to see they had pines and champagne, and Lady Louisa had Col. Neville amongst her attendants.

After the breakfast was finished, dancing was proposed, but it was so intensely hot, Lady Honiton would not let her daughters run the risk of a fever, or of injuring their complexions by joining in it; and perhaps she was not displeased to see Miss Trevallion's heightened by it, beyond a delicate glow, and to the injury of the transparent white, so much and justly admired. This exercise was soon given up, some parties embarked, and were refreshed by the little breeze the river afforded, yet even there it was scarcely perceptible. Though every body complained of the oppression, no one seemed to apprehend any consequences from it.

Soon after eight many carriages came, and those who came from a distance, or were tired, or prudent, gladly went away. Lady Honiton wished to do so too, but Lord St. Leonard pressed her so much to stay for some fire-works, which he assured her would be let off the moment it was dark enough, and as she saw Lady Glen William and Miss Trevallion go away, she was more readily persuaded to remain.

The sun set in a magnificent bed of crimson and golden clouds, the twilight lingered longer than usual, at least so it seemed to those who waited its closing ; at last it seemed rather suddenly growing dark, and a signal was made for the fire-works to begin.

The gardens, where the fête was given, fronted the south, and were on the declivity of a hill, covered at the top with the high trees of Richmond Park ; none saw or guessed the mischief gathering on the other side of the hill, or observed a dense cloud rising behind the trees ; an explosion from a chest of rockets, and a blaze of fire which ran from one to the other, encreased, the brilliancy of the fire-works, and the noise of them, and the shouts of an assembled populace on the banks of the river, prevented a distant rumbling thunder being heard or noticed. A curious device of a salamander pursuing a butterfly, was exhibited in fire, and for one moment was lost in the blaze of a flash of lightning, all now guessed a storm was coming on, and the men who had the care of the fire-works on a little island in the river, seeing the danger of their all catching fire, ignited one after the other as quickly as possible, and the whole presented a grand terrific burst. Whilst the attention of the company was taken up with this, igno-

rant of its cause, a few very heavy drops of rain warned every one to make for the tents, or for the house.

By one of those fortunate *presentiments*, that never can be accounted for, Lord St. Leonard had pressed every one to remain on the hill to see the fire-works; Lady Honiton and her daughters had attended to this request, as well as most others of the company, so that the lower garden was given up to some servants of his own, that he had brought, and to the other attendants, and *their* friends.

The rain in a few seconds came down like a water-spout. No pen can describe the confusion of the company, all rushing towards the house, for it was seen that the tents could afford little protection from such violent rain.

The young and the nimble arrived with but little damage, compared to those who moved slower, and who came into the house as dripping as if they had been drawn through the Thames. The house was to be let furnished, and there were only belonging to it a woman and two house-maids. Lord St. Leonard's housekeeper had come down to superintend the table-linen, &c., and Lady Harriet Egerton had brought her

little girl and her nurse, and those were all that could afford assistance. Lady Harriet being in delicate health had remained in the house during the fire-works, and one or two invalid ladies, but what could they all do with scores of dripping people crowding in?

Lord St. Leonard, who was most active, ordered fires in every room; he was told there were no coals in the house, but on his declaring he would break up the chairs and tables to make fires, those in possession of it found a little fuel, and soon found also, that it was *their interest* to afford all the assistance in their power. Lady Harriet set the example of the most strenuous exertions, in getting off wet clothes, and putting to bed, at least between blankets, all the unhappy sufferers.

Whilst this was going on, those but slightly injured, who had only muslin dresses, were soon dried by the fires; and though hats, feathers, flowers, and ringlets suffered, their owners were soon in a state to laugh at the disaster.

Amongst the most serious sufferers, was Lady Honiton; and amongst the least were her daughters; the fears that some people feel in a thunder-storm added to the distress; but when these were somewhat

abated, Lord St. Leonard proposed they should call in the music, and waltz and gallopade ; nothing could have been better devised to prevent the ill effects of the shower, though the chaperones upstairs were wretched at the idea of their lovely daughters *unprotected*, but they were obliged to submit to their cruel and inexorable fate.

Indescribable was the confusion in drying the various articles of apparel, and the changes that took place ; ladies used to the most exact and perfect attendance, now in the hands of awkward strangers, who nevertheless did the utmost in their power, but it was new business to them, shoes were mismatched, and some so shrunk they could not be got on.

It signified little whether the bonnets were from Madame Payne, Maradan, or Mon. Herbeault, they were equally spoiled, and those who had so reluctantly come forward with their assistance, soon found they should be amply repaid by the *débris* of veils, and scarfs, blonds and silks, which their respective owners gladly exchanged for a pair of house-maid's shoes, a cloak, or a silk handkerchief.

As soon as the lady-mothers could procure any tolerable equipment, they enquired for their daughters,

and their carriages, and departed, much against Lord St. Leonard's will and entreaties, who declared they were just beginning to enjoy themselves, and pleaded hard not to have the party broken up.

The drive to town was *tristesse* itself; Lady Honiton with dilapidated dress, an aching head, and a disappointed heart, hardly uttered a word; and when arrived at home, went immediately to bed, and seemed so very ill, that Lady Louisa sent for the family apothecary; he apprehended much from the cold and fever, of which he had the power of judging; but he knew not all its *causes*; he ordered a quieting draught, and said, "If Lady Honiton was not better in the morning, he must call in Dr. *****," who in the morning found her but little relieved in body, not at all in mind, and it was evident she could not travel for several days. How dearly is pleasure sometimes purchased! and how bitterly, when what is so purchased turns to pain!

Miss O'Brian had been of the Richmond party, and was greatly disconcerted that the friend who took her would come away early. The storm of the evening had been scarcely felt in London, and it was not very early in the following day that she learnt the disasters

it had produced, with which the town was ringing. She immediately went to Grosvenor Square, and was admitted to Lady Honiton's bed-side.

"My dear Lady Honiton," said she, "how wretched it makes me to see you so ill: was there ever such a catastrophe, and after such a charming! delightful! happy day!"

"Oh, talk not of the day, nor its happiness, it had none for me, I hardly know if the *finale* was the worst part of it. All I have laboured for, all I have remained here for, seems dashed to the ground. Lord St. Leonard paid no more attention to Adelaide than he did to fifty other girls, and his encomiums on that new, raw girl were excessive; to have a daughter of *mine* eclipsed by a sprig of the Trevallions was quite enraging!"

"Oh, don't take it so much to heart," said Miss O'Brian, "Lady Adelaide must make a brilliant match, if she does not get Lord St. Leonard; he is not the only young lord in the creation. I have just heard from her, that he selected her for his waltzing partner when you were up stairs, and danced with no one else; and he faithfully promised he would be at the archery meeting at Inglewood, said 'he should like it of all things.'"

“Alas, my kind friend,” said Lady Honiton, “you always try to console me, but now all seems despair! but if my life is spared, I will set off for home the moment Wilson will give me leave.”

In the midst of these piteous lamentations a message was brought up, that Lord St. Leonard and Lady Harriet Egerton had called to enquire after Lady Honiton, and that Lady Harriet, with her love, begged most particularly to know if she had suffered from the effects of the storm.

Lady Honiton sent her *best* love, she had only a very slight cold, and was excessively sorry she was not down stairs, but that the young ladies would be most happy if Lady Harriet would give them an opportunity of thanking her for all her kind attentions at Richmond, adding, “My dear Juliet, do go down and *chaprône* the girls, you can tell me how St. Leonard behaves.”

How much of the message was really carried is doubtful, but it is certain that neither Lord St. Leonard nor Lady Harriet came in.

To those not very deeply initiated into the artificial world of fashion it may seem strange that Lady Honiton had hitherto rather avoided, than sought, Lady

Harriet Egerton's acquaintance, beyond a mere exchange of visiting tickets. But there were material reasons for this reserve; Lady Harriet could not very anxiously wish her brother to marry, as, whilst he continued single, she had the use of his houses, and the command of his carriages; he constantly kept two riding horses and a groom for her in town; and in the country she lived entirely at one of his places, in all respects its mistress. She therefore would be interested in marring Lady Honiton's schemes; and yet, after this breakfast, and the kind attention she had shewn, it was not possible to avoid asking her to the archery meeting; indeed, it was done before the storm, and Lady Honiton was happy to receive a refusal, as Lady Harriet was going a tour in Switzerland with her brother.

"But he had promised to come to Inglewood."

"That is very possible," said Lady Harriet, "for we are to go first, and he is only to join us at Geneva, and he travels so much faster than our little girl can bear, that I dare say we shall be at our place of destination before he sets off."

So there was still one gleam of hope, but even to

that Lady Honiton could not cling, till this kind, *kind* message of enquiry to-day.

Many visitors called, and were let in under the chapronage of Miss O'Brien, an office she was not very fond of, as she chose to consider herself too young for it. Amongst others, were Lord Frederic Mountjoy, Mr. Gordon, Colonel Neville, and Mr. Dallas.

It often happens on such occasions as the thunder storm of the preceding evening, that what is the very extreme of wretchedness at the moment of its occurrence, affords an excellent subject of mirth when all is over.

Mr. Gordon and Mr. Dallas, who had on the occasion displayed great good nature to the dowagers, now made themselves amends by the very ridiculous accounts they gave of those they so kindly assisted; first of their lamentations over bonnets and hats, and then the grotesque figures all the made-up matrons presented, as they handed some of them afterwards to their carriages, not only were head-dresses and ringlets gone, but in many instances complexions also, though every pains was taken to conceal the dilapidated faces.

Lord Frederic declared, if he was rich enough, he would give such a fête, provided he could *secure* a thunder storm.

Poor Lady Honiton heard peals of laughter under her room, and could not doubt their cause.

In spite of every argument and wish to the contrary, Dr. **** would not hear of Lady Honiton leaving town, or hardly her bed, for three days, she had so much fever. This prescription was particularly inconvenient, as she had arranged several visits on her road to Inglewood, and now they would be all thrown out, as her friends would probably have other engagements.

During the three days she was compelled to remain in town, it was too hot for morning drives, but Lady Adelaide, Lady Louisa, and Miss O'Brian took one each evening, including a walk in Kensington Gardens, where the very few people in town were generally to be met; and Colonel Neville and Mr. Dallas were always their "equerries in waiting."

On the last evening before their journey, Lady Honiton came down to the drawing room, and whilst the young ladies were busy sorting music to be taken, and drawings left for mounting, and books re-

turned to the library, Lady Honiton asked Miss O'Brian, "how she had arranged her coming to Inglewood?"

"Oh," said she, "Mrs. Barton, 'the *everlasting* Mrs. Barton,' as you call her, Lady Honiton, has asked me to go to Rochdale with her for a month or six weeks, she will take me, and I shall then be a good way on my road to you; I shall not mind going as far as Penrith in the Carlisle mail, as I shall have Cormach with me, perhaps you can send to Penrith for me?"

"Penrith!" said Lady Honiton with some hesitation, "is beyond our limits, unless the horses were out all night, and that Lord Honiton does not like."

"Well, well!" replied Miss O'Brian, "on such a particular occasion I don't mind posting one stage, if you can send for me from Alauby, I really cannot post more."

"I will certainly do that," said Lady Honiton.

"That point settled, do tell me," said Miss O'Brian, "how Lady Adelaide takes, what you consider Lord St. Leonard's slighting of her; for I cannot for the life of me find out: she seems as gay, as

happy, and as ready to flirt with any other man, as she ever was."

"My dear," replied Lady Honiton, "I am quite easy as to any thing she may *feel* on the occasion. She not only appears to me not to care a straw for St. Leonard, but rather, like her father, to think him silly: but I don't mind that, if I can make him bite, I could soon persuade her into the match: high conditioned girls ought to have none of your vulgar love notions; *establishment* is all they ought to care about."

"But," said Miss O'Brian, "how can you keep them from thinking of love, it is so natural at their age, to like the *tender passion*; however, you, as a mother, and so sage a mother, must know best, though I own it has sometimes surprised me that you like to have that Dallas so constantly about Lady Adelaide and Lady Louisa; he is certainly handsome; and reckoned agreeable, though I may not think him so."

"Oh," cried Lady Honiton, "I have no more fear of him, than I have of his poodle; I am sure Adelaide can be no daughter of mine, if she can so far forget the race from which she sprung as to listen for

a moment to any one so plebeian; nor do I suspect him to be such a coxcomb as to have that presumption. Would I could say so of Neville! but *you* are to stop my fears *there*, you know; you shall hear from me, so Adieu ! Adieu ! and London season closed !

CHAPTER VIII.

As Lady Honiton was too unwell to make visits on her road, she arrived at Inglewood at the appointed time, without her kind lord having any suspicion of her illness, or its cause ; he was truly distressed when he saw her look so pale and wretched ; but found questions were painful, therefore he hastened to tell her he had heard from their son, that he was at Milan when he wrote, and did not intend to stay anywhere on the road, not even at Paris ; so they might depend on him *about the first week in August.* Lady Honiton expressed herself much pleased at this intelligence, as she had been obliged to fix the Archery meeting for the 8th of August, as no one would promise for an uncertain day. Lord Honiton proceeded to say that he and

Lady Clara had not been idle in the cause, that they had rode to Carlisle, giving the principal inn-keepers a card, to signify that Lord and Lady Honiton were to have an Archery meeting in Inglewood Forest early in August, and should be happy to see any of their friends who were touring in that direction, only requesting to have a note of application, specifying the names and number they wished to have tickets for, as none could be admitted at Inglewood Hall without one. There would be a place in the Forest appropriated for those who wished to see the Archery, and who were not known to Lord and Lady Honiton. This place would also be common to the neighbourhood. Lady Honiton did not disapprove of this, provided care was taken that the populace were kept at a distance.

“Then,” said Lord Honiton, “Clara and I went yesterday over to Cardon Hall, Mrs. De Clifford was delighted at the idea of an Archery meeting; but said, “she must come and see you before farther steps were taken, as it must be quite a county thing, an Archery club, and managed by a committee; she proposed its being called *Inglewood Foresters*.”

“I am infinitely obliged to Mrs. De Clifford,” said Lady Honiton, “but you may tell her, my lord, if you

please, that it shall *not* be a *county thing*, and managed by a committee, I know enough of the cabal of such things, and the malicious pleasure of black balling. My compliments to Mrs. De Clifford, and this is *my* Archery meeting, and I do not intend that she, or Mrs. Any-body-else, shall interfere; another year she may do as she pleases; but I wish those joy who have anything to do with a committee of which *she* is a member. I do think it excessive impertinence in her to fancy *I* cannot do without *her* advice and assistance."

Here the matter dropped for the evening, Lord Honiton, with his usual kindness and good nature, attributing Lady Honiton's irritation on the subject to the illness under which she was evidently suffering—and when he said, "he hoped the Richmond party had turned out well—"

Lady Honiton replied, "Delightfully! only a sudden shower of rain came whilst we were looking at some fire-works, and getting a little wet before we reached the house, I caught a trifling cold, indeed the weather has been so intensely hot in town, we really quite envied you in a cooler region."

Lord Honiton was so easily pleased and satisfied himself, he always hoped others were so also, and made no farther enquiry.

Lady Clara heard from her sisters a full and true account of every thing—pleasures and disasters ; and wickedly laughed most immoderately at the effects of the shower, and only regretted she was not there to see the old ladies *en dishabille*, even poor mamma I must have laughed at, without bonnet or wig ! and I should have so enjoyed the waltzing and gallopade without those tiresome dowagers, who fancy it is too hot, and spoil all fun.

Quiet began soon to restore Lady Honiton's health, and two days after her return home Mrs. De Clifford came to pay her promised visit.

The De Cliffords were a very ancient family, and their place, Carden Hall, together with Westward Forest, as a part of Inglewood was called, was anciently included in the domain of Rose Castle, where Edward I. lodged on his way to Scotland, and from whence he summoned his parliament. The De Cliffords were driven from this domain, and Rose Castle was burnt during the civil wars of the houses of York and Lancaster. It was afterwards granted by the crown to a Bishop of Carlisle, who restored it, and it has ever since been detained and used as the residence belonging to the see. The De Cliffords have never been

able to recover it, and have long ceased to attempt it, but Carden Hall, which they retained, was considered as one of the oldest, as well as one of the most beautiful, places in Cumberland. It was situated on the edge of Inglewood Forest, so that its inhabitants were Lord Honiton's nearest neighbours. Mr. De Clifford was the last of his family, and in failure of a male heir, the estate would go to a collateral branch of another name, his wife had been a Yorkshire beauty, and of a good gentleman's family, but unfortunately, for ten years after their marriage, their family consisted only of two daughters, when, to their unexpected joy, a son was added. Mr. De Clifford was a man of great taste, and moreover an amateur artist; but he, fortunately, for his family, possessed a little prudence also, and though he longed to restore Carden Hall to its ancient beauty, and add to it modern luxuries, he thought of his daughters, and desisted. But the birth of his son changed the face of things, and when the little boy was about five years old, and a most healthy, promising child, and the eldest daughter fourteen, he determined to go abroad for three years, to nurse his income for his intended buildings; to collect articles of vertu to embellish it; and also to finish the education of his

daughters. Hitherto the little boy had wanted no instruction but what he had received from his mother, or the governess of his sisters, Miss Littleby; but it occurred to him that travelling with women only, he should lose much enjoyment of the classic scenes he proposed to visit, and this idea coming across his mind when the vicar of Carden and his son were dining with him, he thought the latter might know some college friend who would be glad to have his travelling expenses paid, and perhaps he might add a small stipend for taking his little boy through his accidence. Dr. Blinco's son eagerly listened to the proposal, and after obtaining his father's consent, offered himself next day for the situation, only begging to decline all remuneration, and accept only his expenses, as part of Mr. De Clifford's suite; this of course placed him a little higher in the scale than a tutor, and he was in effect a companion.

At the end of three years the party returned, all improved, the young ladies grown, and accomplished. Miss Littleby more poetical and romantic than ever, anxiously wishing she had been the authoress of the "*Diary of an Ennuyée*," but at all events fully resolved to *publish* her poetic effusions, written or com-

posed on the summit of Vesuvius! on the shores of the Brenta! on the Island of Ischia! and on viewing the Bay of Naples! Mr. Blinco was improved also, (who does not improve by travel?) he was grown so dillitante, so antiquarian; the very best possible judge of Cameos, though on his judgment his friends were often taken in by an antique Sappho, that had not been a week out of the workman's hands. In short, he was a perfect abbé and cicerone, and if it had not been for the loss of preferment, he could have been well pleased to have passed his life in the dominion of his Holiness the Pope.

Mr. and Mrs. De Clifford returned the least altered of the party, particularly Mr. De Clifford; he was only a little more devoted to the fine arts, talked a little more of pictures and statues; and in the most trifling alterations he proposed making in his house or grounds had some classic authority to refer to, "this was taken from a frieze on the temple of Jupiter, and another was a cornice in that of Isis." He had collected a good many pictures and statues, but his friends were almost tired of hearing of his Claud's, his Canaletti's, and his Canova's before they were unpacked, which was not to be till their respective places were ready.

Mrs. De Clifford was grown much more decided and important; seeing the world certainly does give people confidence and self-possession; and the English abroad have opportunities of mixing more with persons of importance and celebrity than would come in their way at home. There is also a greater license in foreign society; foreigners are totally ignorant of the grades of English society, all are received who are rich, whether nobility, gentry, or mercantile; and as characters are not cared for, the English are often led to associate in Rome and Paris with those they dare not name in their own country. Mrs. De Clifford had fallen into some of these mistakes, incessantly quoted the opinions of her dear friend the Countess of Albany, equally with the observations of the Grand Duchess of Parma.

When Mrs. De Clifford's equipage drove down the avenue at Inglewood Hall, Lady Clara exclaimed,

"Oh, I hope she has brought that incomparable Miss Littleby!"

"Mrs. De Clifford knows better," replied Lady Honiton, "than to bring her dependants to visit me."

"Don't be alarmed, dear mamma!" said Lady Clara, "Miss Littleby only comes to take care that *your* wild

daughter Clara does not lead Ada and Honoria into mischief. I asked them to come and see my canaries, my flower gardens, and my dear pheasants, so they are *my particular* visitors, I shall receive them ; and I would not be without Mademoiselle, as she now calls herself, and all her poetry and ecstasies, for the whole world !”

“ Well, well, Clara, manage your visitors as you please, only recollect Miss Littlebo, or whatever you call her, does not plague me ; Mrs. De Clifford will be quite enough.”

When she was announced, she exclaimed, “ I am quite breathless with impatience to see you, dear Lady Honiton, but *Dio meo!* how ill you look !”

“ Only a cold, I assure you,” said Lady Honiton.

“ Well, but only think of your charming idea of an Archery meeting ; just the thing to enliven us in this dull remote county ; but it must be quite too much for you to manage, do let us assist you, I shall be most happy, and I am sure my neighbours Lady Netherdale and Mrs. Prevos will be ready to join also.”

“ I am much obliged to you, but I am perfectly equal to manage my *own* concerns,” replied Lady Honiton, rather stiffly.

"Oh, dear, to be sure, nobody can know so well how every thing of that sort should be done," said Mrs. De Clifford, "but you can have no idea of the trouble of such a thing in the country: my excellent friend, Lady Harlington, tried such a thing once *alone*, in Cheshire, but it would not do, she was forced to make it a subscription thing, a club, in short, and have a Committee of Ladies, and members ballotted for."

"I must beg leave to assure you," said Lady Honiton, "that I never undertake what I do not feel equal to go through with; I have no fears on the present occasion but that I shall be able to collect and arrange as large a party as I wish for; I have been pretty much used to those sort of things."

All this was said in a quiet, decided, and perhaps rather a haughty tone—and it was unanswerable. Mrs. De Clifford could only offer wishes, and give hints, which were equally disregarded: and after a luncheon; the usual attendant on a country visit, said,

"She must enquire after her children, or she should never get them home; really Lady Clara is so captivating and *naïve* one can refuse her nothing, though I do not always bring *my train* with me; but the dear girls were so very anxious to see all their friend, Lady

Clara's pets ; and Miss Littleby has such a charming turn for poetry, I could not refuse her coming to your romantic place, a spot, too, so full of historic recollections, of which she is so worthy ; I did not dare inflict you, Lady Honiton, with my *whole* family, I could not be such a nuisance, you would have said ' The natives from the back settlements were coming on you,' or I should have brought my darling Frederic and Blinco—I do assure you our travels have been rendered most agreeable to ourselves and improving to the young people, by having two such attendants as Miss Littleby and Mr. Blinco. You cannot think how the young Napoleon took to Mr. Blinco, he could never bear his going away, and my gracious friend the grand Duchess of Parma did all she could to encourage the attachment, she is most anxious her son should be acquainted with every thing English—she even asked if there was any place in our colleges appropriated to princes ? but when told our own Duke of Gloucester had no distinction beyond a nobleman's son, she found her idea could not be brought to bear, and quite regretted it."

During this speech, Lord Honiton was in the room, and could not help saying :

"I am glad the grand Duchess's plan could not be brought to bear, we have no mind to realize the fable of the husbandman and the viper, and warm such a snake as that in our bosoms."

"Oh, my Lord!" replied Mrs. De Clifford, "you are quite mistaken there, forgive me for saying so, to one of your judgment; but, really, one must go abroad to see things as they are, your own son: who I hope is quite well, (we saw him at Rome, he did not *look* so then,) but your own son, Lord Ottery, cannot have less idea of becoming master of Europe than the little (indeed I should not call him little, for he is very tall) Napoleon has; he is quite an interesting, simple-minded, gentleman, and brought up without an idea beyond being grand Duke of Parma."

"That may be very true at present," returned Lord Honiton, "but we all know what blood there is in his veins, and depend upon it, a time will come when he will be a fit tool for his worthy grandpapa of Austria, or our own very good friend and ally, the Emperor of Russia, and then see what his love for England will be!—her subjugation. No! no, we will keep him where he is!"

"Well, I see," said Mrs. De Clifford, "how difficult it is to keep from national prejudices; if they steal on

such a great mind as your's, my Lord. I only say, go abroad, for three years, and you will think differently. I dare say Lord Ottery will bear the same testimony when he returns, which I hope will be very soon:" and, with abundance of good wishes for the success of the Archery, and offer of beds &c., for, said Mrs. De Clifford, "you know we are your nearest neighbours, Lady Honiton, and we have plenty of beds, we can take in young men *ad infinitum*, I really think we might put, on the Park gate, 'Lodgings for single men,' we have always some of the *lakers* with us, indeed we are never alone."

In return for an offer that might be a convenience, Lady Honiton extended her invitation to any friends who made Carden their quarter at the time.

When Mrs. De Clifford had collected her children, and governess, and driven from the door, on Lady Clara appearing, Lady Honiton said,

"My dear Clara, *your friend* Mrs. De Clifford has really behaved so well, in giving up all her committee and nonsense, I have given her *carte blanche*, and even for your sake, especially, invited all her children, and Miss Littleby, and Mr. Blinco, about him I had no choice, for Dr. Blinco is such an old acquaintance, indeed had been such a kind friend to your father when he

was at College, his son could not be left out, I fear he will hardly himself be able to come; though he thinks his pony may bring him to the ground, he is such a benevolent old man, and likes so to see the young happy, I wish he may come."

It was not usual for Lord Honiton to occupy himself with his lady's schemes of amusement, but in this Archery he took an uncommon and especial interest. He had within a few years made considerable purchases of Crown lands in Inglewood Forest, and he was anxious to establish his interest in the county for his son, and more particularly, as a general election was expected. Much of the family property, and from which he took his title, was in Devonshire; but in his early days he had stood a contested election for Honiton, and lost it, after spending a sum of money very inconvenient to his father. He had sold most of his property there, and purchased more than an equivalent in Cumberland.

This change could only be made with the consent and assistance of his eldest son, and completing it had detained Lord Ottery in England till he was of age; he then went abroad immediately, and had now been absent three years, *long* years they appeared to his affectionate father.

He was in all respects such a young man as a father may be fond and proud of: he had gone through the usual education of an English gentleman; had been at Eton, and wrote the best *vale* of his year; had taken a very fair degree at Oxford. Lord Honiton had another son, two years younger, who was an *attaché* to our ambassador at Turin. It had been Lord Honiton's wish that Lord Ottery should have letters to most of the foreign courts, not only with a view of forwarding the interest of his brother, but his anxious father recollected, in his own day, the brilliant success of a speech in the house of Commons, from a young man, just returned from visiting the different courts of Europe; and the eloquence with which he described their relations to, and their policy towards, this country. Lord Honiton could desire nothing better than such a speech from his own son, though he did not wish, like the maiden speech just alluded to, that of Lord Ottery should continue for ever, "in single blessedness."

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN Mrs. De Clifford met her family at dinner, Mr. Blinco enquired what success her visit had met with?

"Oh, none at all," said she, "I was quite sure Lady Honiton would be too proud and too positive to do any-thing one asked."

"It is a great pity," said Mr. Blinco, "because now all idea of Diana and her nymphs must be at an end, and Lady Adelaide would have looked the character most gracefully; and I have been making a drawing for the dresses, which I am sure you, Ma'am, will think quite classic."

Mr. De Clifford, and a friend, Mr. Musgrove, who was staying with him, laughed so very much at the idea of Diana and her nymphs, that Mrs. De

Clifford, on Mr. Blinco's account, interrupted it by saying,

"I cannot imagine what can induce Lady Houghton to take all these pains to amuse us natives, I suppose she has a plan in her head, to catch some young lord whom she is decoying down to this Archery!"

"She may have that in her head," replied Mr. De Clifford, "but she has something more."

"I suppose so," said his wife, "or she would not take so much trouble; though to get off her daughters is the object of her life; but, whatever she does, she will have her own way."

"That is pretty much the fancy of most ladies," said Mr. De Clifford, "but I see you are in the basket, though you have been at head quarters; Musgrove and I, in our ride, have learned a great deal more."

"Oh, do tell me, there's a good creature," said Mrs. De Clifford, "I am dying to hear."

"Well, then, to save your life, *electioneering* is her object. Lord Ottery is to stand for the County, with Sir Geoffery Blisset."

"Ye gods," exclaimed Mrs. De Clifford, "is it come to that?"

“Lady Honiton, with all her train of the hundred and ninety-seven kings of Munster, whom she always seems to expect like the ghosts of Banquo, and his line, to rise up before you at her summons—she join issue with *the Blisset*!! Well! it is most wonderful! does she intend him also for one of her daughters?”

“I cannot tell that,” said Mr. De Clifford, “farther than the election this deponent saith not.”

“Where could you hear it, Frederic?” said Mrs. De Clifford.

“Musgrove and I,” returned her husband, “rode over to Carlisle this morning, and Parchment told us—By the bye, Musgrove, did you mind how that scoundrel of a lawyer crept round me, to find out how I meant to vote? I always give myself credit for forbearance, when I refrain from kicking one of those fellows round his own office, and yet they are necessary evils to us unfortunate country 'squires—”

“But,” said Mrs. De Clifford, “who *do* you intend to vote for?”

“That I do not intend to tell even to my dear little wife: no, Caroline, I won't let you dip your fingers in an election, though I have no doubt you would de-

light in it. And I have a notion you would like to oppose the Blisset."

"Who is this person you call (par excellence) the Blisset?" asked Mr. Musgrove.

"Oh!" replied Mr. De Clifford, "one of the many thousands of manufacturers who are shoving us country gentlemen to the wall; his father made an immense fortune by making coarse cloth for the army during the war; when peace came he had sense enough not to kick it down by speculation, but bought land, particularly a large estate, that the late Duke of Dartmoor was obliged to sell after some ill success at Newmarket; his son writes himself esquire, and baronet, his father having been originally knighted, with an address, but this son is a much more rational animal than the old clothier, he was educated at Rugby, has been abroad, and fancies himself rather a fine gentleman, and a judge of horses, because he can afford to out-bid Lord Tilbury, at Tattersal's."

"And he is some judge of virtù," said Mr. Blinco, "and a tolerable classic."

"That is to say," rejoined Mrs. De Clifford, "he made great purchases of your friend Nibby, and at your recommendation; but you could not get him to bite at Noafl's ark."

"That," replied Mr. Blinco, "was the only proof he gave of bad taste, that was a superb gem, indeed ! fit for an Emperor."

"Pray," said Mr. Musgrove, "may I ask what sort of a gem the Noah's ark was ?"

"Something unique," replied Mr. Blinco, "a sardonx, with the animals in white, the yellow left for the ground."

Mr. Musgrove laughed, and, on Mrs. De Clifford asking him why he laughed, said, "he could give the history of that same sardonx, and if he had the power, it might be made as amusing as the opal of Anne of Giernstein."

"Pray let us have it," said Mrs. De Clifford, "I doat on a romantic history."

"I cannot give it till I know what interest Mr. Blinco has in the gem," said Mr. Musgrove.

"Oh, none in the world, I only thought it worth any man's money."

"Well then, this same gem has been under Christie's hammer three times to my knowledge ; it belonged to the old Duchess of Portland, and sold with her things ; it figured some years as a brooch on a little crooked piece of vertù, who sported it about town ; at her death,

it came again to the hammer, and again a third time, and then Christie felt so sure he should get nothing for it, he recommended its owner to send it to Italy to one of the cognoscenti there, as in such hands it would be sure to sell; and I believe the Duke of Lorraine bought it."

"Well, Blinco," said Mr. De Clifford, "what say you to that, and how do you defend your friend Nibby, who, I dare say, sold this as *vrai antique*?"

"I only lament," replied Mr. Blinco, "it did not return to England, it was a disgrace to the taste of my countrymen letting it go; it only shews that an Englishman, in his own foggy climate, loves his money better than his reputation for taste, but in a clearer atmosphere he chances now and then to pick up some elevation of mind."

As Mr. Blinco did not look much gratified by this subject, Mrs. De Clifford changed it, by asking,

"If Lord Ottery and Sir Geoffrey Blisset were likely to come in for the county?"

"That is more than any body can tell," replied her husband, "together they own a large tract of country, and some of Lord Honiton's is old interest, what Blisset's money will procure him I cannot guess; I suppose we might have wormed something out of

Parchment, but I hate those rascals; they, and the Blissets will, half a century hence, divide the county between them."

"Oh, don't say so, only think of our dear little Frederic," said Mrs. De Clifford.

"It may not be in his time, but it will come, and every year adds strength to the coalition: those country attorneys who look so civil, and talk so smooth, must be employed to collect *our* rents, and let *our* farms, but when we go to them for a loan, or a mortgage, the tables are turned, and they lose no opportunity of turning from agent to principal; and, at last, by administering to the wants of landed proprietors, get their estates into their own hands, and leave their own families in *locum tenens*. But you have not got all our news yet, for we met, as we entered the town, three carriages in their best set out, Mrs. Chapman's, the Turnbull's, and the Mayor's, all full of very smart ladies; we asked Parchment what was going on? he told us the ladies were going to Beauclief, with a request that the Duchess of Dartmoor, who is there, would be the Lady Patroness of the Bazaar they have got up for the Infirmary, and also of the Fancy Ball in the evening. We encountered them again as they

returned, and I am sure, by their pleased looks, they had succeeded."

"Bless me! Mr. De Clifford, why did not you tell me this before? Why, I have declined having any thing to do with this Bazaar, because they did not solicit me for the Patroness; I could not be joined with Mrs. Mayor or Mrs. Alderman any thing, therefore I only intended to send my donation by Miss Littleby, and the children, with the pincushions they have made; but now I must go myself, it would be quite a marked thing to be left out of the *élite* of the county. As to the ball, I should as soon have thought of going to the Mayor's feast, but really *now* it is a thing one *ought* to go to. I am sure I have no idea how I shall get a proper dress from London, for the mail must be gone, and I shall wish to have something fresh and unique—I must consult Wilson directly."

Poor Lady Honiton little guessed what an archery meeting, with a county election in its train, was. The London parties she was used to were easily arranged; if they were select (*exclusive* is the right word) she had only to look at her visiting book and mark those *to be asked*; if the party was general, she had as easy a task in marking those who were to be *excluded*, even from

a *general party*. All the rest was done by her groom of the chambers ; and the confectioner only required to know the number of those for whom he had to provide refreshments and supper, and all was done. Sometimes a little fancy as to decorating with flowers, or lighting the rooms, struck the lady of the house, and required her superintendence ; but, in general, the upper servants were equal to regulating the whole thing.

But in the country how different ! Note after note came pressing upon Lady Honiton, requesting invitations from people she had never heard of, with uncouth provincial names : she was under the necessity of referring to Lord Honiton before she could give her answer, and he was obliged to look at the list his agent had given him.

The day approached, and Lady Honiton had driven in her pony phaeton to inspect the disposition of some of the tents (for the archery ground was nearly half a mile from the house), when a servant came breathless to inform her the Duchess of Dartmoor was just arrived ; and, though she was unwilling to interrupt Lady Honiton, wished much to speak to her, and begged also to be allowed to rest her horses. Lady

Honiton and Lady Clara, who was with her, hastened home.

“My dear duchess, to what good fortune do I owe this unexpected and delightful visit?” exclaimed Lady Honiton.

“Oh! don’t call it by all those pretty names till you hear what has brought me over,” replied the duchess.

“Whatever has brought you must be a pleasure to me,” said Lady Honiton, “but where did you come from?”

“Oh!” said the duchess, “the duke still retains Beauchief for a shooting lodge, and we came down for grouse shooting, but he thinks there is no game, or not enough to satisfy him; so he, and Lord Henbury, who is with us, are gone into Scotland to search after a moor; they left me at Beauchief, but the duke will either return to fetch me, or, if he cannot get accommodation for me, I shall go back into Cheshire, to a little place Colonel Gore and Julia are at, of his.”

“Why cannot you come to us instead?” said Lady Honiton, “that would be charming.”

“And I should like it excessively,” said the duchess

“but I don’t know how to promise, till the duke returns; but I will come if I can; in the mean time, dear Lady Honiton, assist me in a knotty business. You know the duke has parted with most of his property in Cumberland, except just where we now are; but, to my sorrow, the good ladies of Carlisle still fancy we have interest, they found me out, and begged me first to patronize a bazaar for the Infirmary, and then a fancy ball in the evening for the same institution: only imagine a *fancy* ball at Carlisle, what an *odd* fancy it will be! I dared not absolutely refuse, for I thought Dartmoor might be so angry; because I know he wishes to keep up some interest here. I dare say he will make me go, and say I must ‘do the civil’ to those horrid people. Now my prayer to you, and I am ready to make it on my knees is, to assist me with your and your dear daughters’ countenance and support, I am sure sweet Clara looks as if she would not refuse me, indeed the petition to me was coupled with this farther one to you.”

Whatever credit Lady Honiton might give to what looked very much like an *after-thought*, she said,

“I can refuse nothing to you, duchess, whatever scrape you may get me into with the good people of

Carlisle, only come here for our archery, and it will make abundant amends."

When the duchess had left Inglewood, Lady Honiton sought her lord to tell him what she considered a most desirable accession to her party, as the duke's interest might be so useful to Lord Ottery.

"I am not so sure of that," he replied, "nobody can be more unpopular than his father was; and it was that unpopularity which induced him to sell his property here, in preference to that in Devonshire, which was, on many accounts, much less desirable. What Blisset's money may do to recover that interest, I know not, but I am sure we shall be much better without any of Dartmoor's interference; and in himself he is a despicable creature, given up to selfish and sensual pleasures, his personal influence is worse than nothing. It is no proof of the wisdom of the dames of Carlisle selecting the duchess for their patroness; though, I suppose, they think her title sounding and imposing; and that she had plenty of money to throw away; they may be mistaken even in that, for her silly husband, like all other egotists, is a mixture of extravagance and parsimony; but you, Emily, have done for the best; you could not know all these

bearings ; indeed, I was not fully aware of them myself, till Parchment pointed it out to me—we must make the best of it now, and be hospitable, if not successful.”

CHAPTER X.

AT breakfast, on the morning of Wednesday preceding the archery meeting, which was to take place on Friday, Lord Heniton asked "who would ride with him?"

Lady Louisa and Lady Clara readily offered to be his companions, and on his saying,

"I am going to Carden, which you will like, Clara,"

She replied, "Oh, I am so delighted, I so long to put Mrs. De Clifford up to this fancy ball, for I have a notion she has set her face against that, and the Bazaar; imagining they will not at Carlisle be what she calls *ton*; but I must go and enlighten her, and per-

· suade her into her fancy dress—what, shall I advise her to, but let me consider—”

“ You consider yourself at least, a very important person at Carden,” said Lady Honiton, “ but all I beg is, that your protégée is not made so ridiculous we shall be ashamed to acknowledge her as an acquaintance ; and if you promise me to be discreet in this respect, you may, from me, invite Mr. and Mrs. De Clifford and Mr. Blinco to dine here on Saturday ; and we must have the Bishop of Carlisle, he is such an old friend of Sir Henry Willoughby’s. I heartily wish these foolish people at Carlisle had not fixed on Monday for their ball ; though, indeed, I don’t see how they could have done otherwise, when they learnt the day I had chosen for the archery. But I wish Sunday had not intervened, it is a day on which one never knows what to do with a mixture of people, or how to amuse them, indeed your father (for Lord Honiton had left the room) is so particular about its observance, I wish the protestants would take example from the catholics, give part of it to devotion, and the other wholly to amusement ; I recollect a catholic friend of mine meeting me, after I had renounced that faith going a second time to church, said,

“ ‘Why your Sunday now is never at an end ! I fasted this morning, for I had a little penance, and then went to mass, and now I am ready for any gaiety. Why don’t you get your devotions over early, and be free for the rest of Sunday ? It used to be so with us at Bruges.’ ”

So closely do the prejudices of education cling to the mind, notwithstanding all her *profession*, and it is to be hoped, *conviction*, Lady Honiton lamented the loss of the shewy and relaxed part of the religion of her youth, they held their place in her imagination, and continued through life.

Lord Honiton was an humble, sincere christian, and a firm protestant ; endeavouring always to act in the fear of God, and in obedience to His laws, he had strenuously and conscientiously opposed the Catholic relief bill ; not from any narrow prejudice to Catholics individually ; but from feeling that they could not be true in their allegiance to the Papal power, or conscientious in the duties of their profession, if they did not, by every possible means they could devise, and at every opportunity, endeavour to make converts ; it was not only their bounden duty, the seal of their attachment to the Holy See, but it was the promised

means of a more exalted place in the kingdom of Heaven.

Lord Honiton had regretted (though he had not said so,) that his house would be full of company on a Sunday; but it would not interrupt his course of duty, and he hoped but little that of his servants;—though he felt he had no right to compel his guests to the same observance, and he dreaded the force of example which the careless and dissolute domestics of the people of the world might spread amongst his sober and steady dependants. The laws of society keep persons in the higher grades from broaching opinions not in unison with those of their entertainers, but in the lower departments of a large establishment there is no such restraint, and incalculable mischief is done by one profligate servant belonging to an accidental visitor.

Lord Honiton's own steady course nothing interrupted, he served his God first, and then did, to the best of his power, his duty to his neighbours; but though he did this in a quiet, unoffending way, he did it with a steadiness that was imposing, and awed even the levity of those of different habits. In him might be said to dwell the "beauty of holiness," for it per-

vaded all his actions without parade, or pretension. It was not likely the guests of such a man would be *scoffers*, but as he left much of that sort of arrangement to Lady Honiton, they might some of them rank amongst the *careless* and irreligious.

Sir Henry Willoughby, his Lady and two daughters, were some of the expected guests; they were of the same steady way of thinking on serious points as Lord Honiton. Sir Henry was a fine specimen of a race now rapidly diminishing, *An English Country Gentleman*. He possessed very large estates, one in Cumberland, which gave him great county influence; and a still larger, with a fine place where they chiefly resided in Yorkshire. He had no son; his eldest daughter (he had two) was therefore a great heiress. Sir Henry was a man of plain sterling sense—judged for himself—and if he did not know all the vices and follies of this wicked world, he had a better touchstone, he knew mankind, judged his fellow mortals with the christian feeling of one who knows himself not to be *perfect*, but who aims at being so, he was truly

“An honest man close buttoned to the chin,

Broad cloth without, and a warm heart within”

and he was, according to the words of another poet,

“An honest man—the noblest work of God.”

Lady Willoughby was a worthy wife to such a man, perhaps she was considered the most intellectual of the two—but she had not a shadow of pretension about her; her solid, as well as cultivated, understanding, sometimes aided the judgment of her husband, but it never overruled it.

Their eldest daughter had no personal beauty, but she had a mind rich in cultivation, and a temper above all price, but she was conscious of wanting that letter of credit—good looks—which passes in society for so much more than it is worth. This made her diffident and retired; she must be sought and drawn out before her worth was discovered. How little like the young ladies whose first lesson has been—“make the most of yourself.” Her sister Helen was cast in a different mould, not really possessing regular beauty, no one found out *what* she wanted, to make her handsome, excepting size, and height, for she was small, light, gay, and playful, and natural, yet her education had been so carefully conducted, all was tempered, her vivacity never became boisterous, or giddy—in one word, she was captivating—no one of any age saw her without acknowledging her power, she was called “the *sunshine* of Middle-den,” her father’s place.

Lady Clara might have been her counterpart if she had been so brought up, but as it was, she was only young, natural, lively and pretty, ill informed, and already a little warped by the world, small as had been her knowledge of it, but she had heard its maxims, and the fresh soil of youth takes easy and deep impressions, as it was, they made in many respects suitable companions.

Lady Adelaide greatly disliked the Willoughby girls, as she called them, and was not always perfectly *civil* to them, or, as she expressed it, able to *tolerate* them, but on this occasion she was not likely even to *heed* them, as she would have her dear lovely friend, the Duchess of Dartmoor, and she cared for no other woman of the party.

Lady Louisa thought differently, she looked up to Miss Willoughby's understanding, liked her conversation, and would have rejoiced in having her sometimes for an adviser.

The Willoughbys lived far off for the greater part of the year, were little in town, it did not agree with Lady Willoughby's health, and for that reason, and to avoid separation, Sir Henry gave up his seat in parliament, and when in town the families seldom met, they had a different set of acquaintance, and Lady Honiton

did not like Lady Willoughby, they looked at the same object—the *world*, through different glasses, but when the young people did meet, Lady Louisa endeavoured to profit by the sensible conversation of Miss Willoughby, asked her advice as to her own course of reading, and her opinion of the books they had both read, and the popular works of the day, and found herself instructed, her judgment corrected, and her taste led to notice what had hitherto escaped her.

As Lady Clara came down prepared for her ride, she met her mother, who said,

“ I don’t know what we shall do with all these odd people we are to have on Saturday, could not you get up some *charades* or *des tableaux vivants*, if you really will play no tricks on Mrs. De Clifford, I give you leave to consult her and Mr. Blinco about this ; they are quite *au fait* to the thing. Oh, here is Louisa ! I shall give you into her charge, that you may not commit me or yourself.”

Lady Clara returned, charmed with the success of her visit, but sworn to secrecy as to Mrs. De Clifford’s *fancy* dress, and the *des tableaux vivant*, but Lady Louisa assured her mother there would be nothing extravagant or absurd in either.

The following day was replete with arrivals, to breakfast came Col. Neville and Mr. Dallas, the latter always met with a warm reception from Lady Honiton, and on this occasion that of Col. Neville was particularly favourable, for he told her he had seen Lord St. Leonard just before he set out from town, who desired him to say he should certainly be at Inglewood for the archery, he thought perhaps the night before, adding,

“ If you will tell Lady Honiton, it will save me the trouble of writing.”

Lady Honiton did not feel all the gratification she ought to have done from this message ; she repeated mentally, “ save him the *trouble* of writing ! it did not use to be so, I believe a friend of mine *de la vieille cour* was right, when she said, ‘ she rejoiced she had withdrawn from the world before she was elbowed out of society by beardless boys and giggling girls,’ this is not the age of parents, but of children ;” yet still her little *bijour* marquis, as she called him, was coming, and the intelligence made Lady Adelaide put on her brighter smiles.

From Lady Louisa and Lady Clara, Col. Neville met with a more honest, hearty welcome ; Lady Clara expressed her undisguised joy ; Lady Louisa was nervous

and tremulous which perhaps said a great deal more. And on his saying, during breakfast to Lord Honiton,

“That he had been afraid he should not be able to come at all, he was kept in such constant attendance at the Horse Guards.”

Lord Honiton hoped he had promotion in prospect, he said,

“Yes, but there are so many competitors for every thing, he had great difficulties to encounter, and some sacrifices to make, for he must go abroad, he knew not where, but such was the lot of a soldier, but he could not otherwise obtain his promotion.”

During this conversation, Lady Louisa was unluckily pouring out the tea, and made the extraordinary mistake of filling the saucer instead of the cup, till it was running over.

“What on earth are you about, Louisa?” exclaimed Lady Clara.

This exclamation calling Lord Honiton's attention to his daughter, he saw her as pale as death, and eagerly asked “if she was ill?”

“Oh no, only the room is hot, and I got up with a bad nervous head ache.”

No farther notice was taken.

Mr. Dallas was desired by Lady Honiton to inspect the arrangements for the archery, the targets, and their situations, and Col. Neville walked with Lord Honiton to see the effect of cutting away part of a wood.

Just as the party were again assembled at luncheon, the Duchess of Dartmoor arrived, and her carriage was not unloaded before Sir Godfrey Blisset came, driving his own well-matched greys, with his body coachman by his side, his valet within, and two grooms on the dickey behind ; as they drove to the door, Mr. Dallas said in a low voice to Col. Neville,

“ How would the old clothier have liked such a set out ? Blisset is making his money fly faster than his father got it, though that was pretty well, I thank you ! ”

“ Such,” returned Col. Neville, “ is always the fate of suddenly acquired riches, ‘ quickly come, lightly go,’ the old curmudgeon knew how to turn pence into shillings, and shillings into pounds ; how to *get*, and how to *spend*, are two different things, they never go together, so they leave the latter to their heirs, who often give an odd specimen of taste ; but Blisset is one of the best of his *caste*, and if he had been born a gentleman, might have played his part creditably.”

Men are always attracted by horses, there is some great and unknown sympathy between the animals, so that Col. Neville and Mr. Dallas went out to inspect Sir Godfrey Blisset's, and hear their pedigrees and perfections.

Lady Honiton always knew her own interest, and followed it; she therefore received Sir Godfrey with most gracious and condescending smiles; but of course, he must give way to her attentions to the Duchess, and the pleasure she expressed at seeing her Grace, and her coming so early!—Lady Adelaide was in raptures.

“I believe,” said the Duchess, “I ought to apologize for coming before dinner time, but I was quite alone, and the society of you, Lady Honiton, and your dear daughter was quite irresistible, so I hope I shall be forgiven.”

All sorts of civil things were said in return for this gratifying kindness, and as the Duchess begged she might interrupt no plan, she took a place in Lady Honiton's carriage, who was going to drive to Rose Castle, to invite the good Bishop to dinner on Saturday, and tell him of the Archery meeting, on which he half promised to look, and enquire how Mrs. Bentley did.

The rest of the party rode, Lord Honiton mounting Col. Neville and Mr. Dallas. Sir Godfrey had his own riding horses, indeed, he travelled with almost as large an escort, and relay, as if he had the wilds of India to make his way through. Lady Honiton returned early to receive the Willoughby party, who were of course regular, punctual people. When they arrived, most of the already assembled party were strolling in the lawn, and walked to meet the carriage on its way. Sir Godfrey said,

“I wonder a man of Sir Henry Willoughby’s consequence does not match his horses better, especially as he is a great breeder, and professes to have his stock from the King’s Hanoverian blood coach horses; they are good in their way, if they were better matched and broke, no horses can be well broke that does not come out of Brookes’ hands.”

Arriving at the entrance of the house put an end to these remarks, and when the salutations were over, Mr. Dallas said,

“Sir Henry, what a fine breed of horses you have, we have just been admiring them.”

“Oh,” said Sir Henry, “you must look at them individually, for my *team*, as I believe you dandies call

it, is very ill matched, for I have several horses sick, but the off leader is the one worth looking at, a prettier mare you will not easily see, a remnant of the Eclipse breed mixed with his Majesty's, I refused three hundred guineas for her and an unbroke filly, I would not take *anything* for her now, she is whole blood, and has as much bone as a dray horse."

Just as the first dinner-bell rang, and some of the party had retired to dress, the Marquis of St. Leonard arrived, and was rapturously received by Lady Honiton; the Duchess, and Lady Adelaide lingered a little with him before dressing, and he told the latter he had brought *Le Noir*, and she was to command where his clarionet was to be played.

When the whole party assembled before dinner, proper introductions took place, and Lord St. Leonard joined Lady Clara and Miss Helen Willoughby in a bay window, and had some laughter. When dinner was announced, Lord St. Leonard, who never consulted any thing but his own inclination, and the fancy of the moment, offered his arm to Helen Willoughby, much to the discomfort of Lady Honiton, and the mortification of Lady Adelaide, who in *pique*, put herself in the way for accepting Sir Godfrey Blisset's arm; when seat-

ed, the parties seemed all mutually pleased, that they were *really* so, was a little problematical, but the same arrangement was kept up, when all the young part of the company went on the water, to hear the effect of the clarionet.

A party on the water having been mentioned during dinner, Lord Honiton said, "it is a fine evening for a sail on the lake, there is always wind enough on the water, and if the ladies choose to be on the alert after dinner they may have some amusement, as my boats are going out fishing, and the trout in this small lake show some play;" and turning to Sir Henry Wiltoughby, said, "mine are very experienced water-men, *we* need not go, but if the young men prefer water to cool claret, they are free."

Of course the young men all offered themselves for the water party, the jaunting car carried the ladies to the water-side, the party enjoyed the fishing scene, and the distant clarionet, was multiplied by innumerable echos; thus occupied and amused, they remained on the lake till after the sun set, leaving it with regret, that there was no moon to tempt prolonged enjoyment.

After their return to the house, and tea, Lady Adelaide and Lady Louisa sang some beautiful duets,

Col. Neville now and then adding a base ; but when Miss Helen Willoughby warbled some Scotch airs, in a naturally sweet, but not a very highly cultivated, voice, Lord St. Leonard hung enchanted over the instrument, till the party broke up for the night.

CHAPTER XI.

How little does the careless guard of a mail coach know or feel that his horn is "the herald of a noisy world," and that the box on which he frequently dozes contains "news from all nations," whilst he, "light-hearted wretch, cold, yet cheerful messenger of grief perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some, to him indifferent whether grief or joy."

It is only those accustomed to live in remote countries that know how material to comfort, nay, even to happiness, is the hour at which the post comes in; it was well observed by a sensible man, that "he did not know what the day would be till the post arrived." In some places it comes in in the middle of the day, and the inmates of a country house hurry home to meet

“joy or woe ;” just before or after dinner is the worst time it can arrive, the society of the house is set in for enjoyment, the arrival of the post often destroys all, bringing perhaps grief and disappointment, it is better earlier in the day, this was the case at Inglewood. Lord Honiton always came to his breakfast table followed by the post bag, which he opened himself, and distributed the letters.

On the morning of the archery meeting he looked with peculiar anxiety for one from Lord Ottery, his last he had read over night and morning for the last week, it said, he hoped to arrive at Inglewood the first week in August ; it happened that the month of August began in the middle, or rather towards the latter end of a week ; *now* we were certainly in the *first* if not the *second* week in August—no arrival ! but if there was no letter from Lord Ottery, Mr. Dallas had one from a friend just arrived from the continent, who had passed his lordship between Milan and Paris, and if he kept his word, and made no stay at Paris, he must soon be here, this afforded a little gleam of comfort.

Lord Honiton distributed the letters to his respective guests, one with a large official seal, with Horse Guards on it, was for Colonel Neville. In giving it, Lord Honiton said,

"I hope that contains your promotion." He gave another to Lord St. Leonard, who, opening it, and throwing it and its cover on the ground, exclaimed,

"This is devilish provoking! I do wish I could beat out Tom Turpin's brains at this moment, for he told me positively that Somerset's horses would not be sold for a week, and now I find they will come to the hammer next Monday, and I would not lose the opportunity of buying his chesnut mare, Miss Funny, for the world, she is the prettiest thing I ever saw, and would carry my light weight to the extremity of the globe. I must positively go to town, and get a look at her before I bid, as I am inclined to do, to any amount."

How Lady Honiton and Lady Adelaide looked at this declaration may be guessed!

Colonel Neville had also read his letter, and, in answer to a second enquiry from Lord Honiton if he might wish him joy, said,

"I hope I shall be gazetted on Saturday, but I fear it will be for a regiment now at Malta; but that I must not mind, it is soldiers' fare."

Lady Louisa was on her guard, she made no mistake between tea cups and saucers, but though she tried hard, she could not swallow a mouthful, there

was a strange lump in her throat, but she flattered herself no one saw the difficulty, for almost every one had letters to read, and she disposed of her coffee and muffin as well as she could.

The servant who had taken out the letter bag which contained the epistles to those in the inferior departments of the establishment, returned, saying "there is another letter for your lordship."

The envelope was extraordinary, the cover of an old letter, the inside contained a small note, rather like a bill, for Lady Honiton, which he handed up to her, saying,

"An iligant epistle from Juliet O'Brian." Lady Honiton read the following :

"Dearest Lady Honiton,

I am dying to get to you ; but a million of things have intervened, the Bartons would keep me till Sir Charles and Lady Crofton came to them on their way to Greystock, kindly thinking they might be able to give me a lift ; they are here, and will bring me to-day as far as Newton ; but they are so very anxious to be present at your Archery, that if I have your permission to bring them, you will have no trouble in sending any where for me ; but if your party

is limited, send word by the bearer, and have the kindness to send the under gardener, my friend John Stokes, and the car will do for me and my *femme de chambre*.

Yours ever in great haste,

Juliet O. B."

When Lord Honiton had read the letter which was taken to him by Lady Louisa, he said,

"Oh, by all means ask Sir Charles and Lady Crofton, and offer them beds; they are old friends of mine, though it is long since we met; I shall be very glad to see them.

Immediately after the present party had finished a breakfast which sometimes in such houses is *unlimited*, and may last from ten to one, the Dean of Carlisle and his two daughters (Miss Williamsons), his niece, Miss Hughes, and her brother, Captain Hughes, arrived; and whilst the greeting with the ladies was going on, Col. Neville asked Lord Honiton how late he might catch the mail at Sandlegate?

"Not after half past three," was the answer, "but must you go to town to-day?"

"I am afraid I cannot delay it," replied Col. Neville.

"I'll give you a cast to town Neville," said Lord St. Leonard, "I *must* go also, and will bet you any-

thing I set off two hours after the mail, and will get to town the soonest ; I always travel by night, and as my carriage converts into a *dormeuse*, you may at least stretch your legs, which you cannot do in these confounded mail coaches ; I don't know that I can take your luggage, as I have my own people, and my trunks, but you can send them, and your man, per mail.

Colonel Neville readily acceded to this arrangement—was it possible that he had been an unobservant witness of Lady Louisa ?—we leave those similarly situated to determine this delicate point.

The Miss Williamsons and Miss Hughes were knowing and practised toxophilites ; the latter had won the prize at Blyfield Archery, and at the Winstay meeting also ; on enquiries being made respecting ground and distance, it was proposed that such good judges ought to reconnoitre the ground before the meeting took place.

The spot selected was between a quarter and half a mile from the house, and, not to fatigue those who were preparing for such exertions, the car was ordered to take the ladies : but Lady Louisa was writing letters for Lord Honiton, to whom she was private secretary, and as the car was soon filled, Lady Clara proposed

waiting for her sister, and going by a short cut through the wood, which she said "would not do for those dressed for the exhibition, as they must scramble through bush and brier. Miss Helen Willoughby begged to be of this party, and Colonel Neville offered himself as chaperon.

They waited but a short time before Lady Louisa joined them, and set out ; they had not advanced far in the wood, when they heard a faint cry, and Lady Clara discovered two very young partridges who had strayed from their nest ; her love for all animals made her anxious to restore them to their parent, and she interested Helen Willoughby in the cause ; whilst they were gone, Lady Louisa leant against a tree, and Colonel Neville looking round him, said—

"Dear delightful spot, when shall I see you again—perhaps never ! but you will live in my remembrance—in my heart—whilst memory holds her seat ; whether my fate carries me to the *burning* rock of Malta, or the *snows* of Canada, I shall have one bright spot to contemplate ! to the last hour of my existence, dear Inglewood !"

Lady Louisa at this touching apostrophe, said, in a tremulous voice,

“Are you then going *for ever*?”

“Soldiers,” he replied, “never know their destination; mine will probably first be Malta, and then perhaps a more distant one,” he added, with a sigh.

Lady Louisa grew paler and paler, and on his saying, “You are not well,”

“Oh, yes, I am!” she replied, “perfectly well,” though the tone did not confirm the assertion; “only, in common with all your friends, I am sorry we are not likely to see you at Inglewood again!”

“Is it possible that you can take an interest in *my* fate?”

“Why should you doubt it?” was the reply.

But on such occasions *words* are nothing, it is the tremulous sound of the choaked voice, the accent, the manner of saying it, that touches the responsive spring, and tells what words are unable to do; a few minutes often determines the fate for life, and before Lady Clara and Helen Willoughby had settled the partridge's nest, much had passed between the lovers, and each understood the feelings that had mutually filled their hearts; they had been acquainted from Lady Louisa's childhood, and therefore much of the embarrassment, usually attendant on such occasions, could not exist between *them*.

Of all the family, Lady Clara had been the most quick-sighted respecting the attachment between Lady Louisa and Col. Neville. Lady Honiton had *dreaded* it; she did not think it a sufficiently distinguished match for a daughter of her's, and, like many people, would not see what she did not wish. But Lady Clara loved her sister most affectionately, had long observed her unhappy, and at last divined the cause; and, for Col. Neville, who had condescended to be her play-fellow from her infancy, she entertained quite a sisterly affection, and had long penetrated the secret of his attachment. When she and her friend returned from the partridges she exclaimed,

"My dear Louisa, what is the matter? I am sure you are ill! you look as pale as death, do tell me, Col. Neville, what is the matter?"

He certainly *could* have told, but he did not.

"Do, Louisa, let us find some substitute for you at the Archery; I am sure you are not fit for it."

"Oh, don't be alarmed, Clara, I am not at all ill, I assure you, do let us go on."

"Well," replied Lady Clara, "if we must do so, let Helen and me be the pioneers, we will break through bush and brier; for we are so late, we have

no time to go round by the regular path ; I am sure Neville will be so good-natured to give you his arm and help you along : don't follow us too close, be sure we have conquered the difficulty before you attempt to come : we love enterprise."

During this short walk, much was arranged, and Col. Neville obtained Lady Louisa's consent to apply to her father, without whose sanction she would promise nothing, beyond what she could not conceal—mutual affection. They soon joined the party on the Archery ground.

Much fault was found by Miss Hughes and the Miss Williamsons, who all claimed the privilege of the initiated, as to the ground, and the placing of the target ; the latter only could now be altered. There was a bough of a tree just above the largest that would attract the eye ; there must either be a clear horizon, or a mass of wood, this must be moved, and other arrangements made : whilst this was doing, Col. Neville stole from the party, returned to the house, and sought Lord Honiton. His pony was at the door, but he was in his own room, of which Col. Neville, an old inmate of the house, had the entrée ; he found Lord Honiton transacting business with his steward.

“I shall have done with Johnson in a moment,” said Lord Honiton, “don’t go, Neville, for I want to hear all about your prospects.”

The explanation went farther than Lord Honiton expected, or, even at that moment, desired ; and when he learnt from Colonel Neville the state of his heart, and the hopes Lady Louisa had given him, Lord Honiton rested his elbow on the table, leaned his head on his hand, and shut his eyes, as if he had seen, as well as heard, more than he wished in Colonel Neville’s agitation—it is easier to shut eyes than ears.

He remained in this position perhaps five minutes ; to a man in Colonel Neville’s situation it seemed five hours ; he really thought Lord Honiton was grown lethargic, and had fallen asleep. But the musings of an anxious and affectionate father are far from the forgetfulness of sleep. At last, Lord Honiton raised his head and said,

“Neville, there is no man on earth I should prefer to you for a son,—but, I have a painful and imperious duty to perform, beyond making my child happy ; to ascertain that her future comfort is secured against those accidents human life is subject to. I cannot, alas ! give her a portion in my life time ; at my death

she, and her sisters will divide forty thousand between them ; but I fear your income is small, and your prospects, though good, yet distant, and uncertain ; Louisa has not been so brought up, as to fit her for following the fortunes of a soldier, she is not a proper wife for one whose establishment is contained in a baggage waggon, she can neither make your pudding nor her own gown, so if you choose to take a portionless ladyship, we must set a little on ways and means."

Colonel Neville told the amount of his patrimonial inheritance, and the produce of his commission.

" But," said Lord Honiton, " my excellent friend, General Clayton has kind, and almost paternal, intentions towards you, I know ; you have not reckoned on them, and I like you for it."

" God forbid ! " replied Col. Neville, " I should depend on any man's will, much less on that of a man whose life I hope will be preserved to the utmost verge of comfort to himself : what my uncle has, he has truly earned at the point of his sword, and has a right to give as he pleases—but his interest is great, and that is at this moment in full exertion, and will continue to be so in my favour."

" Well then," said Lord Honiton, " go to town,

talk this matter over with your uncle, he will not deceive you, and let me know what is *possible*”—but I cannot consent that my dear Louisa should waste her youth and bloom in hopeless expectation. Long engagements are dangerous things, especially when indefinite separation must take place. I will not absolutely put a negative on what would make me happy, because in giving her to you, I should feel I was committing my child to honourable and affectionate hands. All I require is, that this business may only be known to us, including Louisa; that no tender parting scene takes place, nor any thing to betray it to the party here. This I trust to you, and from town, when you have seen General Clayton, you will write to me openly, and I will deal candidly—I will add *partially* by you, again assuring you, I know no human being I should prefer to call my son. Go quietly away to-day, and when this bustle is over, I will see, and talk to Louisa on the matter.”

After leaving Lord Honiton, Colonel Neville took a little stroll in the shrubbery to compose his mind, but not wishing to excite any conjectures, on hearing the party return from the archery ground, he joined them.

More arrivals—the De Cliffords root and branch, with tutor and governess ; Lord Cockermouth, a distant neighbour, and with him Colonel Welwyn ; Sir Charles and Lady Crofton, and the indefatigable Miss O'Brian, Mr. Nesbit, Mr. Thornton, and many other neighbours,—as little interesting as country neighbours usually are. During the arrangement of the target, Lord St. Leonard expressed great annoyance and chagrin, that Lady Clara and Miss Helen Willoughby had gone another way, when *he* should have delighted in accompanying them in their scramble, but he in part indemnified himself by securing the latter as his archery companion, and before they left the ground, Lady Adelaide had condescended to accept Sir Godfrey for her cavalier, and Mr. Dallas had offered himself to Miss Willoughby, and Captain Hughes to Lady Clara.

The discussion after breakfast amongst the gentlemen having turned on the comparative merits of Mr. Somerset's chesnut mare, and Sir Henry Willoughby's gray, it was proposed the latter should be trotted out, and she was accordingly brought to the door.

Lord St. Leonard was enchanted with her, wished Sir Henry would name any price ; that he declared

impossible, as he intended her for Miss Willoughby, and only put her in harness to break her.

"Really" said Mr. Nesbit to those immediately round him, "Willoughby has too many good things to dispose of, or rather to be sought after, a daughter with twenty thousand a year, and a matchless mare, I suppose they go together."

"Of course," said Mr. Thornton, "and both of them have plenty of bone."

"That is no very happy way of mentioning a lady," said Mr. Dallas.

"If Willoughby had put the mare in the other scale," exclaimed Lord St. Leonard, "I might have been a candidate for both, but I don't love tall women."

"It would be no difficult matter," rejoined Mr. Dallas, "to persuade St. Leonard to give up his journey now, for he is hanging between a lady and a mare."

"For God's sake, Dallas," said Colonel Neville, "don't persuade him into that, he'll be tired of the whim in twenty-four hours, and I shall lose my cast to town, and now I have no other means of getting there."

"Are you quite doing as you would be done by?" rejoined Mr. Dallas, rather pointedly; but Colonel Neville turned away.

Whilst the gentlemen were engaged by the respective merits of Sir Henry Willoughby's horses, and those of Sir Godfrey Blisset, which were afterwards inspected, the ladies were making their toilette for their exhibition.

It had been early determined not to have an expensive *costume*, the present fashion of large sleeves suited archery, and a common white morning dress, with a green scarf whimsically put on, and fastened by an arrow, a green hat with white feathers, and a pair of pale buff and green sandals, was the uniform, the latter *a la Diane*.

The gentlemen had green short coats, the rest of their dress white, and a small bugle at their button-hole, and a heron's feather in front of their hats.

The Duchess of Dartmoor was an oracle in dress, indeed it was the only thing she understood, or thought about; and she presided at Lady Adelaide's toilette, and between her own Victorine, and Lady Adelaide's Annette, with much altering, it was at last pronounced *perfect*, by that most accurate of judges, the duchess, who in giving her fiat, said,

“Diana herself could not be more captivating, but don't you imitate her in cruelty, for really your *preux chevalier* is a very decent creature, he improves

upon one, and if *you* take him in hand, and we get him amongst *us*, I do think he will be made something of; at least, dear Adelaide, it must be allowed he has good taste in so devotedly admiring you; and I am so provoked with that tasteless fool, St. Leonard, if I were you, I should do every thing I could to mortify him, to prefer a rosy country gawky to *you*; oh, you are too good for him, if it was not for his rank, that tells to be sure; but I suppose one might be miserable with a marquis, I am sure," with a deep sigh "a duke does not always bring happiness."

After this wise advice, Lady Adelaide was to serve as a pattern for the rest of the party to be dressed after. How little Lady Louisa attended to her's, may be imagined; and it was owing to the vigilance of Annette that her sandals were both the same colour.

In a moment of bustle, Colonel Neville had just been able to tell her, Lord Honiton was not *inexorable*, but insisted on *secrecy* for the present; the rest she would learn from her father, but perhaps she would think it best that they were not partners in archery, for fear they should betray their feelings; great as the violence he did himself in the proposal, he felt it due to the promise he had given Lord Honiton.

Lady Louisa accepted Lord Cockermouth as her coadjutor, but we can neither communicate how all the others were paired for the occasion, any more than we can give a list of the arrivals, beyond those who formed the party in the house; most of the others were directed by the people of the lodge to the wood, where the archery was to take place. The list, notwithstanding, would form a most respectable paragraph in the *Morning Post*, and fill half a column as completely as that of any other great meeting. We must, therefore, in the phraseology of that erudite paper, say, Lady Honiton's Archery Meeting assembled all the *rank*, *beauty*, and *fashion* of the county.

Previous to the house-party leaving it, the prizes had been displayed, and admired; that for which the ladies were to shoot, was a beautifully embossed gold arrow, calculated to make a very pretty ornament for a writing or bijou table; the gentlemen's was a bugle of the same manufacture.

When a due proportion of exclamations had been lavished on these trinkets, the party drove to the ground, the ladies having first drawn lots for their turn of shooting.

CHAPTER XII.

THERE are various ways of doing the same thing ; some more troublesome than others. In London, a lady may open her house to her “ five hundred, or five thousand ” friends, and prove she, “ hates their coming,” by not noticing a tenth part of them ; if she appears near the door of one of the rooms, she is distinguished by those to whom she wishes to show herself as the mistress of the house, but it is not necessary all her company *should* see her. Nay, we have known instances of persons of high rank giving an *At Home*, and falsifying it by going out themselves ; but their company knew it not, and were perfectly satisfied with their entertainment. Indeed, we believe that if a lady honestly put on her cards, my *house* will be

opened, but I shall not be At Home, more of her acquaintance would make a point of going, it would be something *new*, an *ad libitum* thing, a sort of half public entertainment, given at private expense.

Lady Honiton was well versed in London parties, but a country thing was quite new to her. She had always known how to fill a country house with agreeable people, but to “do the civil” to those whose provincial names she could not remember, much less that of their places; in northern counties, there are several of the same name, Howards of *Greystock*; Howards of *Corby*, and Howards of *Levens*; those are *les noms historic*, every body knows those who bore them; but when you come to Smiths, and Johnsons, only distinguished by *this* park and the *other* hall, who could remember them, or recollect their domestic circumstances, so that poor Lady Honiton sometimes in her anxious civility asked, “why the young people were not brought!” of a family that would have given the world for an heir.

Lord Honiton had furnished her with a list on a card, of those who had most interest in the county, and to whom she was to be particularly civil; to this she frequently referred, but after all it was a Herculean

labour, and all that reconciled her to it, was the hope that her dear son would benefit by it.

In town you see the fat faces, and the thin and yellow faces of dowagers, till it is impossible to forget them; but here was confusion confounded, who could distinguish between the wife of the Mayor of Carlisle and the lady of a large domain; and country people are so tenacious of their local importance, to mistake one for the other would throw interest into another scale, she heartily wished Lord Ottery was at home to do the thing for himself, but alas he came not—really the interest of daughters is quite as much as a mother can attend to, especially when that does not go prosperously. Perhaps it was well that Lady Honiton had little time for observation, and still less for reflection. But we must leave her to do her duty as hostess, and return to the archers.

Lady Louisa drew No. 1. She was not scientific at best, but this day she was particularly nervous, and if she could hardly distinguish the arrow from the bow, who could wonder? she had certainly shot one of Cupid's arrows most successfully, but the one she now drew went so wide of the mark, it passed over the target, and on all looking either with surprise or con-

tempt, Lady Clara, by way of excuse, said her sister was too near sighted for an archeress, and probably had mistaken "a young moon" just distinguishable from the fleecy clouds, for the target—no bad idea, for lovers are by right proscriptive "moon gazers."

Lord Cockermouth encouraged her, but she did not do much better with her other arrows; he shot more than once into the bull's eye.

Great skill was shewn by many of the party. Lady Adelaide was the last, she liked that, because it increases the interest; she shot better than her sister, but was so much more intent on doing it gracefully, and gaining admiration for the elegance of her figure, that her utmost effort only put one arrow in the petticoat.

The whole company saw with surprise, not the devotion of Sir Godfrey Blisset, for Lady Adelaide might claim any devotion; but the way in which it was received by her ladyship, and the easy and familiar footing in which he seemed in the family of a proud and ambitious woman, for such was the character Lady Honiton bore.

No doubt stores of country gossip was laid up for the next six months, nor were the ladies of Carlisle behind their more dignified neighbours in their remarks

“of how people do rise in the world!”—and, “how much money tells even amongst the aristocracy.”

When all the arrows were expended, the targets were examined, Miss Willoughby and Miss Hughes were both in the bull's eye, and so equally near the centre, the eye could not determine which was entitled to the prize; the gentlemen disputed, and were ready to bet about it, but a pair of compasses, and a carpenter's rule, decided it in Miss Willoughby's favour; and most extraordinary, her partner, Mr. Dallas, had decidedly won the other prize.

Sympathies are odd things, and there is more in them than our philosophy can explain.

Miss Willoughby bore her triumph more meekly than Mr. Dallas.

“I wonder what Dallas will make of the incident of this day?” said Frederic Thornton to Edward Nesbit.

“He is a fool if he does not make the most of it,” rejoined the other, “I am sure I would.”

“But the lady is not captivating,” was the reply.

“What does he care for that, he will get her father's estate, and the mare into the bargain; I don't know what Dallas is made of, if he resists the temptation.”

Lord St. Leonard, who overheard this last part of the conversation, said,

“I shall envy him one, but not the other; who knows, but before the next hunting season he may want to sell the mare!”

“That was a speculation with a witness,” said Frederic Thornton! “I have heard of a receipt to dress fish, beginning with ‘first catch your fish,’ I take it there’s an old fish to catch, as well as a young one in that fry, and the old boy knows what he is about, if his daughter does not.”

“That girl can never be married but for her money,” said Edward Nesbit, “and never can expect it: they say she has plenty of sense.”

“And a little too much of that perhaps, for *you* or *me*, St. Leonard; but Dallas, like all of his country, and his profession, does not want for tact, so he’ll keep the upper hand, and the girl seems good tempered.”

This interesting conversation was broken by adjourning to the tents for the *dejeuné à la fourchette*.

On this occasion Lord St. Leonard’s famous *artiste Le Noir* had been an excellent coadjutor to Lord Honiton’s *chef de cuisine*, Williams; and many ladies from

the distant and retired part of the country, who did not often see tables so fancifully covered, as well as the Carlisleites, made acute observations, and perhaps memoranda, of dishes and table decorations, which certainly astonished the natives ; it was, as might be expected, done in excellent taste, and in the very first style ; though, to the great discomfort of many of the observing ladies, they could not guess what the *entremets* were, or how sugar could be spun into so many devices.

The conversation was what it usually is in such parties, confined to those who were acquainted ; for Lady Honiton, to avoid getting into any scrape about precedence, or mixing Montagus and Capulets, had arranged a number of small tables in different tents, leaving people to make their own parties ; of course the young got together.

There were probably sage observations made by the elderlies that escaped notice in the bustle, and much nonsense talked by, and to, the young ladies, that is quite as well left unrecorded.

It was the observation of a very clever man, that if he could, by possibility, recollect at one moment all the foolish things he had done, or the silly ones he had

said, in his life, he should go mad and drown himself.

And there may reasonably be a doubt if any one would like such a recollection, so it is as well not to add to the stock of human misery by recording any of the badinage of this day ; especially as the gentlemen had plenty of champagne, which in a morning certainly elevates the spirits and sharpens the wit, though it may not increase the power of abstract calculation ; and it may be questioned if Mr. Dallas, between success and champagne, could have solved a law question, or worked a proposition in Euclid—but there is a time for all things ; and in these wonderful days, young ladies on such occasions drink champagne in a morning ; but they have an example in Queen Elizabeth's maids of honour, who ate beef and drank ale, for breakfast ; though probably the result of beef and ale, on the spirits, was very different from that of the sparkling white and red Sillery. But this is a question we leave to Deville to decide ; he may be able to guess what *bumps* are enlarged by the effervescent beverage.

Some attempt was made at dancing, but the evening was hot, and many of the archers had sufficiently exerted their strength in that amusement. Most of the company, excepting those staying in the house, had

distant homes, and departed early, excepting the Dean of Carlisle and his party, who came from, and were returning to, Rose Castle.

About thirty sat down to an eight o'clock dinner. Lord St. Leonard and Colonel Neville were obliged to take their leave when the *dejeuné* was breaking up; indeed Colonel Neville hurried his companion off, partly on account of his own anxiety to be in town, and still more to release Lady Louisa from a state of restraint and suffering, of which he dreaded the consequences. No leave was to be taken, not even a look trusted.

Lady Honiton's behaviour to her little *bijou* marquis was icy cold, and Lady Adelaide's had a sort of haughty triumph in it; he shook hands most vehemently with Helen Willoughby, and "begged her to assure Sir Henry, that he should not forget his permission to look at his brood mares, when next in Yorkshire."

The journey to town was for the most part a sleepy one, though soon after getting into the carriage, Lord St. Leonard exclaimed,

"That was a capital mare to be sure, of old Sir Harry's! and his youngest daughter is a capital girl too! don't you think so, Neville?"

His companion had no wish to turn back, which his silly, whimsical, fellow traveller would have easily been induced to do, he therefore answered coolly,

“Yes, a good humoured natural country girl.”

“And are *they* not the best after all, Neville?” said Lord St. Leonard, “those London girls are the devil!—or rather their mothers’ are she devils, and they are their imps, up to every thing—and have not one spark of nature about them. I like *unbroke* things.”

Colonel Neville replied, “there are good of both sorts,” and having much food for reflection, declined conversation.

Nothing in the shape of pleasure tires like morning amusements, whether they begin before people are up to their strength, or whether they last longer, and require more exertion, and therefore exhaust both physical and mental powers, we leave to the college of physicians to decide, we speak only to the fact.

Poor Lady Louisa was so overcome with fatigue, or with *something*, that she retired the moment dinner was over, and it was a sore struggle to her to sit through that ; and she returned no more.

The Duchess too was tired, and when she reached the drawing room, stretched herself at length on a sofa,

covering her feet with a splendid shawl. Lady Willoughby concluded this indulgence would only last till the gentlemen joined them, but the Duchess continued her position, with Lady Adelaide seated at her feet, and most of the young men surrounded them, she could not therefore help saying to Lady Crofton,

“ I don’t live enough in the world to forbear wondering at some of its ways ; in my youthful days, such a piece of indecorum as that opposite to us, would have injured the character of a very young married woman. My mother never suffered one of us to sit on a chair till we were quite grown up, and I suppose it had long been the fashion, for in the show apartments of large houses, one sees a few *fauteuils*, some chairs, and as many stools, and they were, I believe, kept as distinct for their respective occupiers as the *fauteuils* of royalty so stickled for in the German courts.”

“ This is an *easy* age,” replied Lady Crofton, “ every one does ‘ what seems good in their own eyes,’ especially the young, who used to be under control, but submit to none *now* ; and though I have sometimes too bitterly lamented having no girl, I see so much that I also dislike in the manners of the present day, I be-

lieve I am happier without, at least, it is my duty to think so ; and the toil I see mothers go through, their vexations, and the little influence they have over their daughters, it almost makes me *rejoice* I do not share their fate. I am sure all that lounging is not wholesome or good for the shape, young women will find that out by and by."

"Indeed," replied Lady Willoughby, "I think it is visible even whilst they are girls."

"To be sure, modern furniture is calculated for lounging," said Lady Crofton, "and we seem fast getting into Turkish fashions, and shall at last sit on ottomans with our feet crossed, at least our grandchildren may. I recollect the Dowager Lady S****, who was of the old school, and as upright as a dart at eighty, going into a drawing room of one of her married daughters, said to a friend who was with her, 'which of those *beds* are you going to repose on?' and turning to a servant, said, 'a cane chair for me, if you please, sir,' and, as Italian chairs had not then been imported, one was found, which was afterwards kept in the room as 'mama's chair.'"

"Perhaps I am old fashioned, and carry my notions too far" said Lady Willoughby, "but I do not

think it delicate for a young woman to loll about on every sofa; and, of course, men follow the example."

The evening was short; attempts were made to get up a little music, but they failed; and after a rubber at whist, the whole party retired.

Miss O'Brian was never tired, she had an inexhaustible stock of activity, mental and bodily; and, on this occasion, though she did attack Sir Charles Crofton at chess, there was so much to observe, so much to puzzle, that her curiosity kept her on the *qui vive*. She knew not what to think; to ask one word of explanation from Lady Honiton was impossible, her time was occupied by her guests; and if it had not, Lady Honiton was in no humour to be questioned. Miss O'Brian knew her well enough to comprehend that it was plain there was much that could not please such a mother, one of whose sentiments she was so well aware; but such parties are like suddenly swelled streams, they must be let to run themselves dry; all attempts at any check only did mischief in some other direction. *She saw how marked Sir Godfrey Blisset's attentions to Lady Adelaide were, and how smilingly they were received by her, and how they were backed by the duchess, who, to be sure, must be a very silly woman,

having made such a brilliant match herself, to promote one so much otherwise. It was quite impossible her dear Lady Honiton, who had so much, of what she considered, genuine legitimate pride, who was, like herself, descended from an hundred and ninety-seven kings, *she* could not intend to encourage a *parvenu*, probably she could not help what was going on, that horrid electioneering interest, but she was sure, when that was settled, he would be dismissed as *he* ought to be, for his presumption. And as to Lady Adelaide herself, she was such a determined, such a constitutional flirt, she was only amusing herself, and taking a little harmless revenge on Lord St. Leonard, who seemed quite off. Of Lady Louisa's illness, Miss O'Brian could make out nothing, excepting that it could not be a thing of much consequence, or Lady Honiton would have been more anxious: she was not strong, and the exercise of shooting, and the heat, might easily account for her looking so very ill.

When the parties separated for the night, Miss O'Brian summoned her attendant, Florence Cormac, to whom she said,

“ Well ! you have a fine gay house here, if you had not at Mr. Barton's.”

“Yes, sure,” was the reply, “such fine company, all so ilegant and genteel, I never, sure, set my eyes on such a house-keeper’s room full, some of them quite entirely gentlemen, Sir Godfrey Blisset’s in particular, sure and indeed, his master must be fit for a lord; he is so generous, and all—cares for nothing as to money, so long as things are ilegant and genteel; a fine thing indeed, my lady, it will be for Lady Adelaide to marry such a grand man, as they say my lord cannot give her any of the money.”

“When, Florence, shall I ever break you of calling me *my lady*? it is quite improper; I am tired of telling you of it.”

“Well, and sure, but you are *my lady*, and *my honoured lady*.”

There was so much genuine and national feeling in this, it must be pardoned, and Miss O’Brian continued.

“Why, you silly creature, do you believe all the bragging nonsense people’s servants amuse a still-room party with? it is quite impossible Lady Adelaide can think of Sir Godfrey; why don’t you know his father was a wool-comber, or some such thing?”

At this information Florence, who was brushing

her mistress' hair, started back quite to the other side of the room.

"Jesu Maria!" exclaimed the astonished abigail, whose adoration of family was not inferior to that of her mistress, for she was herself a Milesian, and had due respect for the long line of kings the O'Brians numbered in their pedigree, and considered her own consequence greatly augmented by the circumstance, and thought her own dignity compromised by mixing with the servants of a *parvenu*, and in one moment her aimable friend Mon. Dujou, Sir Godfrey's man, fell one hundred per cent in her estimation, by living with a man of yesterday, but giving vent to, "thoughts that burn," she said, "I am sure Monsieur does not know t^{is}, he is too good a Catholic to have told me false, he takes his master for *mi Lor Anglais*, as he calls him."

"Well then," said her mistress, "don't you be a busy-body-thankless, and undeceive him, he will get as well paid, and perhaps better, than with one of a more illustrious race."

"I don't know that," replied Florence, "though, to be sure and certain, Mon. Le Noir had a better place, but then he was only chief cook to the Marquis

of St. Leonard, and that's not so high as own *gentleman*.

"Have done with all his nonsense about servants, and finish my hair." "Have you heard no other news?"

"Oh yes, sure, (and must not I say my Lady,) every body says that Col. Neville and my Lord have had some fall out about his saying too much to Lady *Louisa*, and they say he's gone over to the Indies for ever; and her maid, *Annette*, who is very close for a French woman, says her lady is gone to bed quite broken-hearted like, it was all that, made her shoot so badly. And *Annette* says the Duchess, who is such a grand lady, and must know what happiness is, has told Lady *Adelaide* that she's not happy with the Duke, notwithstanding all her fine gowns, and laces, and beautiful jewels, and no doubt Dukes and Marquises are much alike in the treatment of their wives, so that is the *raison* Lady *Adelaide* scorned the Marquis."

"What a gossip's hall is this said still-room," exclaimed Miss O'Brian, though anxious to get all its tattle, well knowing, what much better judges of the master's actions servants are than is generally sup-

posed ; and how much more they see than it is intended they should see, and yet those who notice the unguarded “ table talk ” in many houses, can hardly wonder at any observation made in the servants’ hall, for the company often seem to forget that those waiting on them have eyes, or ears ; and those who pique themselves on never talking to their servants, or enquiring of them the affairs of their neighbours, will yet give, before them, the most unguarded opinions, both on public and private transactions, and then wonder those opinions go forth.

As Miss O’Brian knew that Florence was a fertile source of information, she prolonged her toilette, and said, “ is that all your news, tell me something nearer truth, if you can.”

“ Why and ye would not sure think I am telling you what is not true, for I am sure and certain it comes from the best authority, but they say Mr. Dallas, that gentleman as you dislike so ma’am, wants to get Miss Willoughby, and they say she has thousands and tens of thousands a year when Sir Henry dies, but his man says, there ’ll be two words to that bargain, and he asked me, as his country-woman, if Mr. Dallas was of a great family ? I must own to my thinking he’s a very

nice gentleman, though *my* lady does not like him, so I could not do the young spark an ill turn, so I just said, his father's a grand lawyer, and can do what he pleases at the Castle in dear Dublin."

"Well then says he," that may do for *my* Sir Henry, "and he's as good a master as ever wore shoe leather, has no notion of young reprobate lords, who will only want his money to spend at Newmarket. I see he did not like that young Marquis being so sweet on Miss Helen, he'll soon throw him off, if he comes after her."

With this last piece of information, Miss O'Brian dismissed her attendant, and began to muse over and puzzle out the real truth of this intelligence; but comparing it with her own observations, and what more her own sagacity would produce, she was willing to defer seeking Lady Homton's confidence till all was a little quieter, or more decided: the breaking up of such a party was always like the concluding of a novel, it produces something that was not expected, but it was beyond her patience to think of Sir Godfrey Blisset's (and she repeated the plebeian name of Blisset) attentions being so received, but elections, like misery, make strange alliances. Lord Ottery, not

coming was another enigma, she too had heard of his being on the road, but she did not say so ; or that he was not thought in good health. She certainly never played Cassandra, she was no prophetess of ill, it was much more to her interest to gain the favour of those who could be useful to her, by flattering their foibles, and consoling them under their disappointments.

CHAPTER XIII.

IT is always difficult to find morning amusement for a mixed party in a country house, especially when there is neither shooting nor hunting. The stable, the news-papers, and billiards, are soon over ; happy therefore is it when there is a *show place* in the neighbourhood, a celebrated ruin, or even a manufactory. In a county so abounding in natural beauties as Cumberland, this evil was less felt than almost any where.

Rose Castle was always a place to take strangers to, its history was so connected with the subjugation of Scotland ; there Edward I. resided when on his way to the conquest of that kingdom, and his writing a summons thence to his parliament, dated *Apud la Rose*, is commemorated there by a curious picture

painted on the panel of one of the rooms ; but on this occasion it was not proposed to take the party there, as the Bishop and his guests, the Dean and his family, were coming to Inglewood to dinner. It was therefore determined to go to Greystock, where there is a fine ruin of the Abbey, a Catholic chapel which is still used by the neighbourhood, and one tower complete, which is repaired, and fitted up as a hunting lodge, and belongs to a branch of the Howard family, but at that time lent to a friend of Sir Charles Crofton's, whither he and Lady Crofton were going.

This country was all new to the Duchess of Dartmoor, the Duke having so lately married her, she was at Beaulief for the first time. Sir Charles answered for the hospitality of his friend, and Lord Honiton was glad of an opportunity of visiting Mr. Elliot, who had been one of the spectators of the Archery, with the Bishop of Carlisle, and Dr. Blinco, but neither of them dismounted from their ponies, or partook of the *dejeuné*.

The expedition fully answered, sketches were taken, and Miss O'Brian did the honours of the Chapel jointly with her friend and confessor, father O'Leary. After luncheon, the party set off for Inglewood, and

as a large part of it were equestrians, Lord Honiton said, "they might take another road home through a different part of the forest, and see some more of his domain and improvements."

Going through a gate, which was held open by a groom of Sir Godfrey Blisset's, the ladies had all passed through, when the groom's horse, which was fidgetty, struck his head against the handle of the gate, and gave so sudden a start, as to throw the man back, and compelled him to let go the gate, in falling back it brushed the flank of Sir Henry Willoughby's famous mare, on which his vanity to shew her off, and his persuasion of her gentleness, had induced him, for the first time, to mount his daughter. The animal was startled, and, like a young thing, jumped all four legs off the ground; the bang of the gate behind her, had startled Miss Willoughby also, she lost her seat, and was thrown with violence on the ground, but she had presence of mind enough to keep her hold of the bridle; the person who was immediately following her through the gate was Mr. Dallas; but he dared not leap it, or his horse would have come on the fallen lady; he dismounted in a moment, sprung over the gate, but when he reached her, she was senseless, and had relaxed her hold on the

rein ; but the frightened mare stood perfectly still by her side. The others came up, water was procured, and Miss Willoughby carried to a cottage ; she soon revived, said “ she was not hurt, and quite ashamed of herself for being such a bad horsewoman, and disgracing Sir Henry’s favourite mare ; but the heat had made her nervous.”

Sir Henry, when he had seen his daughter recovered, went to inspect the mare, she was unhurt, but his stud groom, who was holding her, said,

“ Poor beast, she is as much frightened as Miss Willoughby, for you may see her heart beat through her ribs ; but she’ll do so no more I’ll be bound.”

“ So I think, Thomas,” said Sir Henry, and returning to the cottage, proposed, like an old sportsman, that his daughter, if she could muster courage, should mount her again, he said, “ it would be best for both parties to make up their little quarrel as soon as they could.”

Miss Willoughby was quite ready to follow her father’s advice, but the ladies all opposed it, and Mr. Dallas exerted all his eloquence against the measure.

Sir Godfrey offered his horse, the quietest of animals ; but after a good deal of discussion, as Mr. Dal-

las rode Lady Adelaide's, which they were sure was used to carry a lady, the saddles were changed, and all came safely home. Miss Willoughby was advised to take a little repose till dinner.

As the men were sauntering about till the first bell rung, Frederic Thornton, with a clap on the shoulder, said,

“ Well, Dallas, fortune favours you.”

“ What do you mean ? ” he replied.

“ I like that,” said Edward Nesbit, “ as if you did not know ; but, however, we will be merciful, and say nothing about your looking as pale as Miss Willoughby ; there must have been some extraordinary sympathy between you, or else you have a very *tender heart*.”

“ The devil take your mercy and forbearance, is no one free from your quizzing ? ”

“ Oh, my good fellow,” returned the other, “ as only ‘ the galled jade winces,’ and I don’t wish to give you an opportunity of putting a bullet or two in me, I shall merely wish you joy and success, only remember you give us a little shooting at Middleden some day.”

Mr. Dallas could not stand this, and he walked away into the house.

“Poor fellow,” said Frederic Thornton, “it is hard on him to have our banter when he has so much at stake, for he don’t seem sure of gaining the prize; I’m much mistaken if old Sir Harry’s obstinacy about his daughter’s mounting her grey mare again was not to prevent the exchange; I’ll bet any thing the accident of to-day will put the old boy on his metal, he won’t now let Dallas hang about her as he does, those poetical, ready fellows, have always the best chance with an ugly girl, because if they are not pretty, they generally try to be odd or shy; such poor devils as you and I would have no chance with such a girl, or I had half a mind to have tried to cut him out; but, after all, the old buck is so hale, he may live till he’s ninety, and I’ll be bound he’ll not part with the rino in his life time, and he’d make a strict bargain about Newmarket and Crockey’s. Dallas does not care for either.”

“After all,” replied his companion, “it is a confounded thing to be noosed so early, poor younger brother as I am, I should not like to lose my liberty, nor to account to any one whether I went to Paris or London; and you guardsmen, least of all want wives when you are young just in the hunting and

shooting season, I should like the command of Sir Henry's hounds and his manors, but the rest of the year I should wish madam under ground."

These worthies having settled the point, that neither envied Mr. Dallas, went in to dress, though both gave a specimen of the ruling passion of the present day amongst young men, *avarice*, and the most selfish species of avarice ; they covet what will contribute to their *own individual* gratification ; it may be less sordid than that of the miser, who heaps up his store without a heart to spend it, but it is not one jot a better passion, and leads to many vices which even the other is exempt from, for it has generally gaming added to all other sorts of dissipation in its train.

In justice to Mr. Dallas it must be acknowledged he was not actuated by this evil spirit, his father's allowance was fully equal to his wants, and he knew his future provision would be ample, but he was *ambitious*, he had no relish for the drudgery of the English Bar,—he unfortunately kept other society than lawyers, he wished to be in parliament, so much for his ambition—then his *vanity* was gratified by the notice Miss Willoughby had, though very diffidently, taken of his *jeux d'esprits*, and led into conversation with her, he

found her ready to appreciate all his talents : was it in mortal man to resist the pleasure of this feeling ? ?

She was little accustomed to any but the most *interested* attentions, chiefly from those who had adjacent estates : and her humble opinion of herself, and her high one of a clever, rising young man, who, compared with most of those she met with, was a bright star, drew her in, to receive his attentions, before she was herself aware of how much she was gratified by them. The fall had opened her eyes to Mr. Dallas's feeling, and scrutinizing her own, and not concealing from her own heart how much she was gratified by his anxiety, and doubting her father's approbation, the hour of repose was to her one of serious, and not unprofitable reflection.

The dinner party was uncommonly pleasant ; the Bishop was a cheerful man, of great information ; and seated between Lady Honiton and Miss Willoughby, the latter was greatly pleased with his conversation ; she had contrived to avoid, for the first time, being led to dinner by Mr. Dallas, by renewing her acquaintance with Mr. Elliot who had been persuaded to join the party.

The De Cliffords had come early, as there was a

little preparation to be made for *les tableaux vivans*, and Mr. Blinco soon left the gentlemen to assist in the getting up. The Bishop, of course, was an early person, and therefore Lady Honiton had begged all might be ready by the time tea was over.

Mrs. De Clifford had been indefatigable in preparing the dresses, and she assisted at the toilette, and Mr. Blinco to the scenic disposition.

The drawing room opened with folding doors into the library, a large room, very well calculated for the exhibition; it had a bay window at the end, the curtains of which were formed into a tent, and when all was disposed, the doors were thrown open—to those to whom such exhibitions were new, which included the Bishop and his party, and the Willoughbys, *les tableaux vivans* was astonishing. With those who pretend that it is a *perfect picture* we must differ. It has not the *effect* of a picture, it wants the breadth of shadow, which though in some degree fictitious, throws out the figures and harmonizes a picture, but it is something between a picture, and a scene in a play. This now represented, was Coriolanus yielding to the intreaties of his wife and mother: first were Virgilia and her son, young Marcius, kneeling; when this had been duly ad-

mired, they retreated, and Volumnia, the mother, came forward, knelt and implored, when it came to Coriolanus yielding and saying,

‘ Oh Mother, Mother ! you have saved your country but lost your son.’

Though it was only dumb shew, it was so inimitably done, a tear started into almost every eye.

When the door closed on this scene, the carriages for the party from Rose Castle were announced, but Lady Honiton intreated they would stay a few minutes, as it was early, and could not possibly infringe on the Bishop’s rules ; he pleaded Saturday night, but before the point was settled, the door again opened, and presented a group of Niobe and her children ; this was infinitely the most perfect, the lights were so placed, it had quite the effect of a group of sculpture ; Mr. Blinco got great credit for his arrangement of this exhibition : the Bishop and his party took leave, and it was doubtful if all was over, when the door again opened, and Niobe and her children were turned into Diana and her nymphs, a beautiful group, of which Lady Adelaide, who had been a principal performer throughout, was to gratify Mr. Blinco, the Diana of his sketch ; this concluded the exhibition, and whist and chess went

on, whilst the party from Cardon hall rested from the fatigue of the performance.

Miss O'Brian asked Lord Honiton if she might have the jaunting car to take her to the Chapel at Greystock, and on telling her maid it was accorded, Florence said

“ And we may have a smart beau, not John Sparks, but Mons. Dujeu will be too happy to be our driver.”

CHAPTER XIV.

SUNDAY all the party attended the parish church, excepting the Duchess of Dartmoor, who was languid, and breakfasted in her own apartment, and Miss O'Brian, who, driven by Monseieur Dujeu, and accompanied by Florence Cormac, went to Greystock Chapel.

When they were all assembled at luncheon, Lady Clara, who was opposite an end window of the room, exclaimed, "Oh, there is Ottery; I am sure it is a foreign carriage I see coming through the wood."

"Where! where!" was the cry, no carriage could be seen.

"Why, Clara, you must be out of your senses."

"On no, there is one little gap in the wood, where

one can always see a carriage, but it must go all round by the east lodge before you can see it from the other windows."

"Clara is right," said Lord Honiton, and he had hardly said it, when a carriage appeared in sight, so much lower than an English equipage, no doubt was entertained of who it was, and Lord Honiton summoned the servants, and was at the hall door when it drew up, and the long absent—anxiously expected—and beloved son, was received into the tenderest parental embrace. Lady Honiton and her daughters followed into the hall, and she pressed her son to her maternal bosom, and his welcome from his sisters was of the warmest kind, Lady Louisa's was accompanied with tears of joy. Lord Ottery was taken into the dining-room, and introduced to the party there.

It is no less remarkable than true, that people never allow for the ravages of time or climate in others; for themselves, though they look daily in their glass, the operations of the great enemy are slow, and excepting when recovering from a severe illness, no one thinks himself altered; this deception extends to others, we part with a fine lad of eighteen for the army, navy, or India, and wonder when a man of

thirty returns bronzed and weather-beaten. But who thinks of an alteration for the worse between twenty-one and twenty-five, and in the delicious climate of Italy!

When in the hall, Lord Ottery had his travelling cap and cloak on; and though his family were struck with some unexpected alterations, so that any where else they would hardly have known him, it was not till he was disrobed, and came into the full light, that they discovered how thin and sallow he was grown; and, when, in the foreign fashion, he arranged his hair by running his fingers through it, they observed his hands were almost transparent.

What the feelings of affectionate parents, on such an occasion must be, cannot be described, each saw it, and looked—and looked again—in hopes it was a visual deception; but neither Lord nor Lady Honiton dared to look at each other, they mutually wished to conceal the distressing truth in their own bosoms, to hope they might be mistaken.

Miss O'Brian, who could not know what parental feelings were, and was a little apt, when her own particular interest was not in question, to blunder on some injudicious observation, exclaimed,

“Why, Lord Ottery, what have the Italians been doing with you? I think some jealous marquise must have given you poison, for you really look as if you had been living in the Pontine marshes ever since we parted from you.”

Lord Ottery laughed at her remark, but he did so with a short hacking cough, so that Lady Honiton could not help saying,

“I am afraid, Frederic, you have been more ill than you told us—”

He assured her not, “that it was only the foggy air of this climate.”

“Come! come, my Lord,” said Sir Henry Willoughby, we honest John Bulls must not hear our country so depreciated, you have a great stake in it, and I hope will love it, and its climate too, as you ought.”

The company were separating as the speech was finished, and Lady Honiton retired to her own dressing room, and locking the door, threw herself on a sofa, and burying her face in its pillows, burst into a most violent flood of tears. Truly she proved that “the heart knoweth its own bitterness,”—bitter indeed were her feelings!

Mothers are reproached as anxious and coddling,

but there is a cord that vibrates in a maternal heart different from that of any other being!—not even a father can feel as they do, nor can have the same instinctive insight into danger, and in proportion as the feeling is deep, so is the anguish which is excited, even by one glance.

Lady Honiton saw that glance of treacherous brightness in Lord Ottery's eye, and a difficulty of breathing; but she saw also how jealous he was of any notice being taken of his health. This one engrossing anxiety for a time swallowed up every other; but the relief her tears brought, made her resolve to be as calm as possible, and by no means communicate her fears to her Lord.

Lady Honiton, with all her foibles, was a most affectionate and devoted mother. She possessed the warm heart her country is famed for producing. Nor was she deficient in understanding, but she was greatly so in education.

It has before been said that her mother was a Catholic, and in those days, persons of that persuasion mixed so little out of their own pale, they naturally became bigotted.

Lady Tipperary was weak in body and mind,

wholly under the influence of her priest and confessor, and devoted to the severest duties of her religion. At an early age, Lady Emily Bourke was sent to the convent of St. Catharine's, Bruges; and of all the instruction to which the name of education is given, that of a convent is the *worst*—the most defective—the nuns, who are teachers, are ignorant of every thing but curious needle-work; what can they teach? they enter the cloister themselves at an early age, and all books but one or two on devotion are forbidden; and of the world they know nothing. Yet there are *two* things to be learnt in a convent, *obedience* and *regularity*; but they are both taught under such irksome forms, that they create disgust, rather than form useful habits; it is not the obedience of the heart and affections which springs from love and duty, and which is so dear and precious to a parent, and such a reward for all the anxious cares of childhood. It is *compelled duty*, and a *regularity* so monotonous as to be painful; and the discipline of the Roman church has so little to engage the heart, though so much to affect the imagination, it cannot be wondered that any girl, and especially a beautiful and greatly admired one of sixteen, who had been instigated by a lively companion

to ridicule the whole thing, should, from the moment she turned her back on Bruges, endeavour to forget all she had seen or endured there, for there was nothing in the system she was under to improve the understanding, or regulate the heart.

Lord Honiton was, when he married, a very young man, deeply enamoured of his wife's beauty and fascination, and whilst his father was lord-lieutenant, she was the star of the vice regal-court. Soon after that Lord Ottery (as he then was) stood a contested election for Honiton, and lost it, which greatly added to his father's embarrassment; and his dying soon after, his son, with his beautiful wife and a young family, found himself obliged to live with them in great retirement at Broadcliff, in Devonshire.

Had Lady Honiton been capable of educating her children, it would have been a fortunate and favourable situation, but beyond speaking French, she could not even assist; her own occupation was chiefly beautiful needle-work, she had therefore no other idea of education than having a French governess; the one she got was a good creature, spoke pure French, and could teach a little geography and music. Lord Honiton soon perceived how deficient his daughters were likely

to be under such tuition, and therefore himself devoted two or three hours every day to what he called English reading, and by that means gave them all the valuable information they had. Lady Adelaide was quick, and gave him little trouble, but she was also volatile and forgetful, and lost all she had acquired the next moment after the lesson was over ; and having been early used to hear from her injudicious governess what havoc her beauty would make, gave her thoughts to vanity, rather than improvement. Lady Louisa was slow and timid, but she profited by her father's instructions, and became a most useful assistant to him as his private secretary. Lady Clara was his youngest, and his plaything, the way in which she reminded him of her mother at the same age revived many youthful feelings, though she was by no means so handsome as Lady Honiton had been.

Lady Clara was still his pupil, and, since Lady Louisa had been out, his companion. When the young ladies were old enough for masters, Lord Honiton was sufficiently recruited in finance to go to town every spring, but London is equally a bad school for uncome-out girls and their mothers ; the former learnt incessant lessons of vanity and flirtation, and Lady

Honiton saw the struggles and manœuvres of calculating mothers, and their aim at brilliant matches, without being herself wise enough to despise the system; on the contrary, she fell into the stream, and swam with it.

The *éclat* Lady Adelaide's first coming out produced, turned her own head and her mother's also; Lady Louisa escaped this contagion; first, because she had better sense, a more cultivated understanding, and less beauty; and secondly, her attachment to Colonel Neville, which had grown with her growth, was a shield of adamant to her.

There is always a great matrimonial prize to be contended for every spring in London, which sets the maternal world on the *qui vive*. Some young Duke with a hundred thousand a year; some Earl whose long minority has made him rich enough for a dukedom; and the lady mothers always conclude, that if a man is rich enough to marry, he *must* marry, at least he *ought* to marry, and to choose a portionless beauty.

There is an illustrious instance of an amiable nobleman having been so persecuted in early life by speculating mothers and aspiring daughters, that he was frightened into confirmed bachelorism; and other in-

stances may be given less honourable, of those who have made such attacks an excuse for making unworthy, and, as they fancied, *less interested* marriages.

The last of this noble game that Lady Honiton had pursued, had just slipped through the toils she had spread for him; perhaps both herself and her daughter better understood “weaving nets than making cages.”

When once a blow is struck on the heart which lays it open to its possessor, it is like a breach in a citadel, the enemy rushes in “ten thousand strong.” Poor Lady Honiton received that blow in her son’s altered health—and all her other disappointments and vexations, real or anticipated, came crowding on her. If Lord Ottery’s health had had nothing really to give her alarm, there was bitter disappointment in his general alteration.

He went abroad a particularly handsome young man, he had her fine outline of countenance, and her commanding figure, but the latter wanted filling up—what was he returned? a sick Spaniard! thin and yellow! every fine feature attenuated, and too large for his countenance; still he was handsome to those

who had never seen him before, but to those who had, what a wreck !

To Lady Willoughby it was not necessary to make apologies for two or three hours retirement of a Sunday, she did the same, and happy would it have been for Lady Honiton to have employed those hours like her guest ; from such reading and meditation she might have drawn comfort and consolation, by looking up to the highest source for both. But the impressions of early youth are strong ; Lady Honiton had been taught to consider the Scriptures as a sealed book, excepting to the priesthood ; and she always opened her Bible, (though trusting she was allowed to do so,) yet, as if she feared she was doing wrong ; and read it with an awe that destroyed the comfort she ought to have derived from the perusal ; it was not to her the Book of Life, she dreaded lest it should be that of death. The consolation she drew from her own mind was slight and precarious ; she tried to persuade herself that her fears had exaggerated the evil, that she was nervous, her spirits fatigued, and inclined to see all *en noir* ; by these fallacious arguments, a little *sal volatile*, and plenty of rose water, she made herself up, body and mind, to meet her friends at dinner.

Lord Ottery's looks were improved by the duties of the toilette, and the dinner was cheerful and pleasant ; Sir Godfrey and he had many mutual acquaintances in Florence, Rome, and Naples, people that all the English are introduced to, and there was much to enquire about ; and Lord Ottery had some capital anecdotes of a Princess Augustolina, that amused the whole party, and his dubbing Sir Godfrey knight errant to this wonderful lady, occasioned a good deal of mirth.

Invalids are generally best of an evening, particularly those who have pulmonary complaints ; there is a fever and excitement, that, to inexperienced eyes, appears for a time like renovated health ; whereas, it is the consuming fire, burning a little brighter. But it deceived both Lord and Lady Honiton, they hoped much that had at first alarmed them was the effect of the fatigue of a long journey, and a sea voyage ; and they were much gratified by the account Lord Ottery gave of his brother, with whom he parted at Milan, having previously spent some time with him, and his old friends, Sir Alexander and Lady Julia Wedderbourn, at Turin.

As there was only service once on a Sunday at the

parish church at Inglewood, Lord Honiton read a sermon and prayers to his family and establishment in the evening, and as Sir Henry Willoughby always did the same, their respective servants made a large congregation. Those of the party who did not join it were the Duchess, who seldom left her sofa after dinner, Miss O'Brian, of course, Mr. Thornton, Mr. Nesbit, and the foreign servants. And Lord Honiton saw with regret that his son remained behind, when the party adjourned to the library; but as he always made the most favourable excuse for every body, he concluded Lord Ottery was shy, and did not like to exhibit himself before the assembled household; or, that so long used to the gaiety of a foreign sabbath, he was not yet accustomed to our English way of spending it. The sermon, by accident, was on the text, "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

There were many parts that came home to Lady Honiton more than she liked to allow; to the vexation of spirit, she fully agreed; but she did not attribute her failures to *vanity*. So little are we inclined to look into our hearts, and so resolutely do we shut our eyes on all that wounds our self-love.

Soon after the library party returned to the drawing-room, Lady Clara said,

“Oh, Ottery, how I shall like to see you dance again; you used to enjoy it so! and I rejoice there will be an opportunity so soon as to-morrow night.”

“I fear, dear Clara, you will lose that gratification, if it be one, for my dancing days are over, and I don’t go to balls.”

“Astonishing,” exclaimed Lady Clara, “bless me, what an *old* gentleman you are grown, Frederic! however, I don’t mind what you say now, for you have not been in a dancing country; when once we get you to our ball, we shall soon overcome your resolution.”

“But you are not likely to get me there; I never go to such places.”

“Why, then you must stay at home by yourself; I am sure you won’t turn sulky; that’s not your nature.”

“I hope it is not; but nevertheless, I mean to stay at home; I am not afraid of my own society, and I have letters to write.”

“Oh, nonsense, Frederic! why you must go in the morning to the Bazaar: I am sure you won’t

refuse that; as it is a charity to our poor Infirmary."

"You, Clara, shall be my almoner to any amount you please, only protect me from going to either that, or the ball."

Lady Honiton had been giving a gentle hint that as the next would be a long day, they had all better retire early.

They were to have a nominal breakfast at Rose Castle in their way to Carlisle, and the Dean had offered them a scrambling dinner, if Lady Honiton and her friends would accept such as his house-keeper, for he was a widower, could arrange on so short a notice, and also beds for all the ladies, as he could command a prebendal one next his own, if they preferred a private house to an inn.

Lord Honiton had bespoke dinner at the George Inn, for twelve or fourteen; but it would be so much more agreeable to the ladies of the party to have a quiet dinner, and a private house, he urged their accepting the Dean's invitation. He, Sir Henry Wilmoughby, Sir Godfrey Blisset, and Lord Ottery, must dine at the inn, and he could easily fill up the table, and, on such a night, no doubt, the landlord of the George would be glad they gave up the beds. All

this had been arranged the preceding evening, but Lord Honiton, hearing his son's declaration that he was not to be of the party, when he took his candle, desired Lord Ottery to come with him into his private room. When there, after a pause of some minutes, Lord Honiton said,

“I don't think, Frederic, you can be aware of the importance—the necessity—of your appearance at Carlisle on an occasion when so large a part of the county will be assembled, and where you must be introduced as intending to offer yourself a candidate for the county, when a general election takes place.”

“I had hoped, my dear father, that I had fully explained myself in my letter from Milan, and that you would have entirely given up all idea of proposing me to represent the county; a situation I never can bring my mind to hold. I detest the House of Commons.”

“Detesting Parliament in a hereditary member, is rather unfortunate, as you *must* one day take your seat in the House of Lords.”

“God grant that evil day may be far off, if it ever arrives,” exclaimed Lord Ottery, “but still that is a different thing, I should take my seat there as an inde-

pendent senator, bound by no pledge, limited to no line of politics."

"But what pledge can you fear in the other house? Alas! that of voting against Catholic emancipation is at an end. I should be sorry we differed on that, or any other point; but *that* is ceded now."

"Only in part," replied Lord Ottery, "no liberal or enlightened person can suppose that those long withheld *just* rights, which have been now so tardily and reluctantly granted to the Catholics as a *boon*, will satisfy them. No! they will *claim*, and I trust *obtain* the restitution of *every* right and privilege their forefathers possessed, and which the Protestants have so unjustly withheld."

When this conversation began, Lord Honiton was standing with his back to the grate, though there was no fire, and swaying, first on one foot and then on the other; but at this speech he raised himself bolt upright, fixed his eyes stedfastly on the door opposite to him, and remained for a few minutes as if turned to stone, for his face was as pale as death, his son looked anxiously at him, there were icy fingers on his heart; but his blood ran cold only for a few seconds, when the warm tide rushed with double force to its usual course;

luckily he was a spare, and temperate man ; or an apoplectic fit might have followed the revulsion ; he threw himself into a chair, and remained for a short time silent, when, after some struggle to clear his voice, he said,

“ I am at a loss, Frederic, to understand the full drift of your speech, though I gather enough greatly to distress me.”

“ I am sorry for it,” replied Lord Ottery, “ but surely my letter must have made you fully aware of my sentiments, I wrote explicitly.”

“ I don’t know what letter you are talking about, the only one I received from Milan was short, and only spoke of your having been ill.”

“ Then one must have been lost,” replied Lord Ottery, “ for the one I allude to, was of some pages, and written before my illness, which I believe I mentioned in my short one.”

“ To whom did you intrust it ?”

“ To Arthur, who was with me ; he promised to stop the ambassador’s bag, and I certainly think he did so.”

“ I never received it,” said Lord Honiton, and, after a pause, he added, “ I have yet to learn the extent of your unfortunuate prejudices, I may call them *fear-*

ful delusions. Have you renounced the Protestant faith?"

"No! but I entertain those liberal feelings towards my Catholic brethren which I feel they deserve; as they are most probably in the right, and nothing on earth shall make me vote against those feelings, my conscience will not allow me."

"I think," replied Lord Honiton, after a pause, "my conduct to you, Fredric, has always been such, that you need not fear my requiring any thing contrary to your *conscience*, but as a son, I demand from you, the same considerations for my *honour*. I am pledged to your offering for this county, if parliament is dissolved; I have no intention of standing a *contested* election, but I have gone too far to withdraw at this stage of the business, you must therefore show yourself as the candidate I mean to bring forward, and time and circumstance may enable me to withdraw you, or perhaps substitute your brother; though it will greatly inconvenience me. We are both too much agitated to canvass the subject to night; you must accompany us to-morrow, I can take no refusal; good night, and may your pillow be easier than your father's!"

And, followed by Lord Ottery, Lord Honiton left the room.

That either father or son retired to very tranquil rest was not to be supposed, and the latter had a hectic fever also to interrupt his ; but his mind had imbibed opinions that superceded every sense of duty to his father, and therefore under this delusion he felt a great degree of self-satisfaction. How shall we describe the disappointment of an affectionate father, who had looked forward through three long years to the return of this darling son, who had pictured him as all the fondest parent could wish, who on every occasion of discomfort had turned towards Frederic for solace, and whose every effort was exerted to promote his interest, and his welfare.

How bitter must be Lord Honiton's feelings, especially as he was, to the highest degree, orthodox in the Protestant faith, to find this cherished son, almost, if not altogether, a Roman Catholic—could he believe it? How could he have been so led astray? Alas, that is no subject of wonder! he had been living amongst those whose interest it was to draw every Englishman of any consequence into the pale of their church. Could there be any taint in his blood? he sprang, on his mother's side, from the O'Brians and O'Dermots, all most determined bigots, but this suspicion delicacy

forbad his hinting to Lady Honiton, and indeed he determined to keep all from her till they were quite alone.

That there was any attachment to a Catholic Lady never entered Lord Honiton's mind, though such a suspicion might have made much, that now seemed improbable, more a matter of course; for the Roman Catholic priests, in virtue of their office as confessors, meddle in every transaction, and make every event subservient to their purposes. Nothing with them is wrong that will add a member to their church, and the dangerous doctrine that "the end justifies the means," is a salvo to measures the most unjustifiable.

CHAPTER XV.

THERE was a sort of irregular breakfast before the party set off for Rose Castle, there they found a most hospitable one.

Lord Ottery joined neither, but his father depended on his appearing at Carlisle.

Accompanied by the Dean's family, they all set off for the town hall, where the bazaar was held, and arrived when the room was more than half full. Great pains had been taken, and a good deal of taste displayed, in decorating the respective counters with pink, yellow, and blue calico, and a number of very pretty and ingenious articles were displayed.

Way was made for the Duchess, Lady Honiton, and her party, who went to the principal stall, at which, pre-

sided the Mayor's daughter, Miss Dowbiggin, and he cousin, Miss Wilkins. These young ladies, *new* to the trade of recommending their wares, were rather nervous and diffident, but the Duchess's kind admiration was encouraging, and she asked for two chairs, saying, she and Lady Adelaide would help sell the things.

Amongst other articles was a black velvet waistcoat embroidered with a border of foxes in gold. The Duchess asked what price was put on it, and when told five guineas,

Exclaimed, Five guineas !

Miss Dowbiggin very modestly said, "If your Grace thinks it too much, we will lower it, but the materials are expensive, and the work troublesome, and we thought, as it was for a charity, we might go a little beyond the shop price."

"Oh dear !" said the Duchess, "I do not mean it is too *much*, it is a vast deal too *little*, it must be twenty guineas."

Miss Dowbiggin timidly said, "she was afraid that would be far beyond anything they could get."

"No ! I assure you," replied the Duchess, "the higher the price the better chance you have of getting rid of it, but leave that to us," and turning to Lady Ade-

laide, she said, "we will get you a purchaser, and if we don't, which I think quite impossible, it can be put into a guinea raffle."

Miss Dowbiggin had nothing to do but submit. The gentlemen had not yet joined them, as most of them had some business to transact at Carlisle, at last they appeared, and as Sir Godfrey Blisset came up to the stall where the Duchess was, she said,

"Oh, Sir Godfrey, here is something made on purpose for you—a hunting waistcoat, do look at it, you must positively buy it, and give twenty guineas for it."

Had she left out the price, her prey might have been caught; but looking at it he said,

"No, no! it will not do for me, I am not enough of an exquisite to wear such a thing."

"Nonsense," said the Duchess, playfully, "there is nothing *exquisite* in it, I assure you, it is the very last Parisian fashion—Charles X. and the Dauphin wear them, only they have boar's heads on theirs, which are not half so chaste and elegant as these beautiful foxes."

But Sir Godfrey thought of the cost, and was insensible to the beauty of the work.

At this moment Lady Clara, and Miss Helen

Willoughby came up, and to escape the waistcoat persecution, to which he saw he must yield at last, and to sell himself as dearly as he could, he said,

“Oh, Lady Clara and Miss Helen, take compassion on me, and give me the benefit of your taste in choosing a table: I cannot decide between a chess-table, and one that is so beautiful an imitation of Mosaic, I should almost think it real, and made in Rome, the design is so classic, I can't determine between the *dolci* and the *utile*.”

As the party walked on, a gentleman came up to Miss Dowbiggin's stall, and asked if the waistcoat was sold, and being told it was not, put his hand in his pocket, saying, “I believe it is five guineas.”

The poor shop lady coloured deeply, and said, “No, sir, twenty guineas.”

“I beg ten thousand pardons for my mistake,” said he, withdrawing his hand from his pocket.

It was such a piece of duplicity as poor honest Miss Dowbiggin could not stand, and she added, “It was marked five guineas, sir, but it has been thought it might fetch more, and as we are selling for a charity, we are bound to get all we can.”

“Certainly,” said the gentleman.

But on her adding, "Perhaps it may be raffled for, at guinea shares," he desired five shares might be put down to Mr. Litchfield.

When Lady Clara and her friend were taken to the stall where the tables were, it was impossible to choose; the chess table was so useful, and the other so beautiful, and seeing Sir Godfrey much inclined to the latter, she said,

"I do think you must have both, indeed a choice is quite impossible," and turning to the young lady who presided, she said, "Sir Godfrey will, I am sure, take *both* these tables."

There was no resisting this, and he paid his ten guineas for them, satisfied that he had gained much *eclat* and consideration by having them chosen by Lady Clara Aston; they then returned to the Duchess, who immediately began,

"Sir Godfrey, if you do not take the waistcoat this instant it will be gone; I would not let it go to a gentleman who was here just now with his hand in his pocket."

She did not certainly state the thing quite fairly, but turning to Lady Adelaide, said,

"Now, don't you think Sir Godfrey *must* buy it?"

he will repent it all his life if he does not, I am sure it was made on purpose for him, was it not, Miss Dowbiggin?"

But the latter was not practiced in fashionable deception, and could only bring herself to say, "it was made purposely for whoever pleased to buy it."

"What a silly girl that is," whispered the Duchess, but renewing the attack, she declared, "Sir Godfrey *ought*, for the sake of the charity, and in his own country, not to refuse it, if he did, she would post him up for stingy," the playful way in which this was said, and a few soft smiles from Lady Adelaide, and her assurance of "how very good natured it would be in him to be such a benefactor to the Infirmary," he at last felt for his purse; whilst counting out the amount, Mr. Nesbit, who was behind him, said to his companions, Mr. Thornton and Dallas,

"They are making Blisset bleed, but there is a good deal of the old clothier in him, for they have had a tough struggle."

"Oh," replied Mr. Dallas, "that's all a hum, he has only been coquetting a little; I went with him to the bank just now, when he desired to have fifty sovereigns in exchange for his draft, he knew

he ought to give that sum to the Infirmary, if he means to stand for the county; but there would be nothing in putting it down as a benefaction, who but the treasurer, or the governors, would know he subscribed that sum; now having it dragged out of his pocket, by these fine ladies will raise him mightily amongst the fair ones of the county, and be talked of for a month; he knows what he is about, I assure you."

Success emboldens—the Duchess and Lady Clara joined forces, and took their victim to a table covered with albums, and drawings, and paintings to furnish them with.

"Now," said Miss Helen Willoughby, "Sir Godfrey, you must have an album to put on your beautiful mosaic table, let me choose you one?" and she took up a five guinea one, with a Bramah lock, "this *must* be it," said she, "No! no! you shall not look at any cheaper one, you can't disgrace your table, and besides, *we* all mean to give you drawings, and you cannot disgrace *our* drawings or the table we have chosen."

This argument was yielded to, and many drawings were selected for it. The fifty sovereigns were on the

wane, when Sir Godfrey left the party in search of some one, he encountered Miss O'Brian.

“ You are the very person I wanted to meet, do come with me and select some bags, or any thing I may present to the ladies of the archery party.”

She did so to the number of ten, and he procured from one of the shop ladies, a pretty abigail to follow him with these things in a tray, and asking in the humblest way the Duchess to honour him by selecting one ; she did so, and he then begged the lady archeresses to take a remembrance of the day ; one was left, and he presented it to Miss O'Brian to her great delight, for she had managed to pick up several little useful and ornamental articles for her London lodgings next year, every body she said was so good to her !

The bazaar over and successful, the ladies adjourned to the deanery ; but as a party chiefly female would be rather dull, the dean easily prevailed on Messrs. Nesbit, Thornton, and Dallas, who had no county interest to forward, to secede from Lord Honiton's dinner and join that at the deanery ; the table at the George was easily filled up. After dinner the Dean's party drank tea in his garden, and then retired to dress for the ball.

Great had been the expectation of the Carlisle ladies as to the dresses of the Duchess and Lady Honiton's party, and they were not disappointed.

The Duchess was in a dress she had worn at a great London fête, as Anna Boleyn, a crimson velvet head dress, ornamented with pearls, a robe to match, with a petticoat and sleeves of white satin. The duchess was a pale delicate beauty, and this dress particularly became her. On this occasion she had not her jewels, as they had been deposited at the banker's, before she left town; but she had trinkets enough to make a very splendid stomacher, necklace, and Sevigné; her unfortunate prototype could not have looked more lovely, when she received the crown consort of the kingdom, and drank prosperity to the city of London in Hippocrass.

Lady Honiton was in a full court dress of the early part of the reign of George III., a large hoop, ruffles, lappets and a fly cap, she had all her diamonds, stomacher, sleeve knots, &c., and with her fine commanding figure, she might have represented Queen Elizabeth. We fear we must confess, however, that some little disappointment took place respecting the rest of the party. As it had been agreed at the Archery meeting

that a costume quadrille in the dresses worn on that day, with a very little alteration, would be remarkably pretty.

There is no occasion on which Englishmen feel, or imagine they feel—so silly as at a fancy ball, but at the Archery meeting, to gratify the members of it, it had been determined as a compliment to the Ladies Aston, that the hunting coats of the following year should be green with gilt buttons, and a dress coat of the same colour with white waistcoat, &c., was voted a fancy dress for the ball, by which means a large number of the gentlemen were in the same costume; it saved all the trouble of appearing as Turks, or Albanians, or rubbing up old regimentals, and enabled the stewards to join in the costume quadrille without spoiling it, the ladies had made a little alteration in their green and white costume, and it was altogether pretty, but not gay enough.

The Duchess preserved the dignity of her character, and did not dance. The good people of Carlisle, not used to fancy balls, made a curious mistake, not aware that at a London fancy ball *looking* the character was sufficient, some of them who remembered the masquerades of former days, which these balls have super-

ceded, thought it necessary in some instances to *act* as well as *look* the character.

Amongst these was a Miss Gillingham, on all occasions a conspicuous person; she had long passed *sa premiere jeunesse*, and having no beauty to captivate, nor a fortune sufficiently large to tempt any man to a sacrifice, she had remained, much against her inclination, in "single blessedness;" but as she was neither handsome nor rich, she had resolved to be *odd*, to say things nobody else would say, and do that which no rational person would do. She affected a sort of masculine manner, sung strange songs, and laughed at jokes that would have been addressed to no other lady. Within the circle in which she moved, her family connections were a sort of protection to her, though they lent themselves as little as possible to her eccentricities. At this ball she appeared as Mother Shipton, dressed to perfection, and she persuaded one of her brothers, and his wife, to appear as Punch and Judy, a reel between this trio was inimitable, and never will be forgotten whilst Carlisle holds its place among cities. There were several hardly inferior exhibitions, a hornpipe by a gentleman in a sailor's dress, and an allemande by two Bohemian peasants, was perfect.

Mrs. De Clifford was in the costume of a Neapolitan peasant, with a richly embroidered scarlet jacket, —her husband was a peasant also, but they looked more like a bandit and his wife.

Amongst three hundred people, Lady Honiton had many county duties to pay, and was not sorry that the Duchess acted as chaperone to Lady Adelaide; poor Lady Louisa hardly danced at all, and when she did, was scarcely sensible of the difference between *chain des dames*, and *cavalier seul*.

The two stewards conducted the Duchess and Lady Honiton to supper, and consequently Lady Adelaide was left to Sir Godfrey Blisset's protection; she had repeatedly danced, and publicly flirted with him the whole evening. There was a long narrow passage to the supper room, it was crowded to suffocation. There is nothing so favourable to a little *tendresse* as crowded door-way, or an impassable stair-case. Sir Godfrey availed himself of the latter, and Lady Adelaide felt, without reflecting on the encouragement she had given him, that she was, under pretence of anxious care, pressed rather too closely and too fondly; when the supper room was reached, she coldly withdrew her arm, and at

table addressed all her conversation to Lord Cockermouth, who was on her other side. Sir Godfrey saw this, and naturally feeling a great degree of pique, made no farther attempt, either to ask her to dance, or even to converse with her. On her part, she hardly knew how she would act, if he had at that moment made her an offer, she was sure she should have given him a decided refusal ; and yet she could not help feeling the melancholy truth, that she had been out three years, and nothing very brilliant had been *quite* within her reach : only in prospect—in imagination ; nothing could be more perfect than all Sir Godfrey's appointments ; his fortune was ample, and *her* family and connexions would give her an overwhelming superiority ; in short, in a cooler moment, she felt it was not a thing to be sneered at.

On the following morning, when Sir Godfrey came after breakfast to the Deanery, and claimed Lady Clara's and Miss Helen Willoughby's promise of putting the drawings he had purchased, at their desire, into his Album, Lady Adelaide was more gracious than at the close of the preceding evening, her behaviour then had determined him not to return to Inglewood, he pleaded unexpected business, but hoped,

when Lord Honiton and his son came to canvass his side of the county, they would make Woodbury-hall their residence, and when he approached the Duchess to take leave, she gave him a most cordial shake by the hand ; he advanced rather doubtfully towards Lady Adelaide, but she coloured so deeply, and held out her hand so readily, that the blood equally mounted to his face, and he made his last bow, hardly perhaps understanding his own position, but the most favourable impression is always the strongest, and therefore some of the hopes he had dared to form, revived.

As Beauchiff was in a different direction from Carlisle, the Duchess, as well as the Willoughby family returned there, the dinner and evening were rather dull, every body was tired, and the ball not worth talking over, as so few of the company were known to the Inglewood party.

But Lord Honiton, whatever he suffered, kept it as much as possible to himself, he deferred any farther conversation with his son, till he could summon all his fortitude to meet the event : the only persons that evening not languid and listless were Miss Willoughby and Mr. Dallas, the latter felt he could bear suspense no longer, and whilst a little music was going on,

leant over the sofa, where Miss Willoughby was sitting and poured out his whole heart, she heard him tranquilly, and referred him to her father, without whose sanction she could not receive his attentions ; but she did not say *with it* she should be reluctant.

The following morning he waited for Sir Henry, as he returned from his usual inspection of his horses : his suit was heard without surprise ; Sir Henry coolly said,

“ I must talk to Margaret, and I must know what your father’s abilities and intentions towards you are ; my daughter is so situated as to attract many who may not weigh her merits, as I hope you do ; but I must feel on sure ground ; I am a plain straight-forward man, and as such, you must excuse me, Mr. Dallas ; but, as I never go from my word, I am cautious how I pledge it. To whom do you refer me ? ”

“ To Lord Honiton, or rather to Lady Honiton, as to her, and her family, mine has been long known.”

An interview with Lady Honiton was greatly in Mr. Dallas’ favour ; but still reference must be made to his father, and, till the result of that was known, Sir Henry gave him no invitation to Middleden.

He next talked to his daughter, who he plainly saw was favourably disposed towards Mr. Dallas, though, with her usual good sense and discrimination, she assured her father she had given him no hopes of receiving him as her lover, till he had his sanction. This was not quite what the young man hoped, or expected, but it was, perhaps, as much as he could reasonably look for.

The departures were full of mutual regrets on the part of the lovers, at least, expressed by a few tender looks, and a very long shake of the hands. But we must leave the Willoughbys to discuss their own affairs, either on their way, or on their arrival at home.

The Duchess soon after took her leave, and her last injunction to Lady Adelaide was—consider before you finally reject—was there any probability that she would have any opportunity of rejection? had she not already shewn a species of caprice, that might drive a man not well versed in worldly young ladies, from the field.

CHAPTER XVI.

A FEW hours after these departures, Lady Honiton summoned Miss O'Brian to take a drive with her, and they had not been very long in the carriage, or very long discoursed on trivial matters, before Miss O'Brian said,

“My dear Lady Honiton, what has Lady Adelaide been doing with that little Marquis, what dislike has she taken to him?”

“Oh,” cried Lady Honiton, “don't mention the subject, it distracts me; I really cannot tell how it happened, but *this* I am sure of, that *he* is a person of very bad taste, which I did not suspect, and caught by any vulgar pair of red cheeks, and what he, silly creature, calls *nature*; and I can only suppose, for I

never dare broach the subject to Adelaide, that she was so piqued by his want of attention to her, and by all he showed to that little gigling, missy thing, Helen Willoughby, that, in revenge, she took up with that Sir Godfrey Blisset, whose very name grates on my ears, but to whom I am obliged to be civil, because of this election ; but I am sure Adelaide can only mean a little amusement, a girl of her pretension is always forlorn without an *attentif*, and I am sure Ottery has no great mind to the man for his colleague, he seems to hold back on every occasion, but my lord has, unfortunately, as I think, plunged in, and, I suppose, cannot now retract."

"By the bye," said Miss O'Brian, "I don't think Lord Ottery looks well, and I have heard he was very seriously ill at Milan."

"Spare me ! spare me ! my dear creature, on that head," said Lady Honiton, "I think he looks dreadfully, every time he fetches his breath short it goes to my heart's core : and yet I cannot find out what ails him, it seems so like a *mental* malady, I dare not think on it, indeed I hardly know on what I dare think, to *think* is to be wretched, I know not which way to turn for comfort, nor can I imagine an effort I have *not*

made. Adelaide ought by this time to have been brilliantly established, if I had had the common luck of mothers; Louisa is quite on a par with the girls that get comfortably married, but Adelaide is really a first rate beauty; and, there is Clara, ready to throw them both into the back ground, and yet I am sure I have toiled early and late, and done all other mothers do, but *luck* is every thing, I am convinced of that, or why would that little silly Lady Jane Mordaunt have been Duchess of Dartmoor?"

Miss O'Brian was, somehow or other, contrary to her usual habit, disposed to be one of Job's comforters; whether it was that her insatiable curiosity had got the better of her, or what it was, but instead of the usual consolation she was wont to administer to her friend's complaints, she could not help saying,

"But why did Colonel Neville go off in a tangent, as well as the Marquis?"

"Oh," said Lady Honiton, "his was only military business, he has got promotion, and is going abroad."

"Really! and now Lady Honiton, as we have a few moments together, tell me what has happened to Lady Louisa, for she looks wretchedly, and seems so out of spirits—who has she left in London? or who has left her?"

"Of that I know nothing," said the cautious mother, "Louisa always had a moping way, and liked retirement. I don't think hot weather agrees with her, or the exercise of shooting."

"And are you sure there is nothing else?" said her inquisitive companion.

"Indeed I neither know, nor desire to know; if girls will form improper attachments, they must take the consequences, but a little suffering brings them to their senses."

Miss O'Brian saw she was on the wrong tack; and, as the sailors say, she "wore her vessel" to another, by saying, "really I am quite surprised to see how very gentleman-like Sir Godfrey Blisset is. It is not wonderful that he should admire anything so charming as Lady Adelaide, we must give him credit for good taste, because that gawky Miss Willoughby, and her giggling sister, were, one would have thought, more in his style: but really the Duchess took very much to him, she and Lady Adelaide quite protected him.

"Don't talk of it, for heaven's sake," said Lady Honiton, "I could not help seeing it, Adelaide was so piqued, and so justly piqued, by Lord St. Leonard, I don't wonder she was inclined to be a little revenge-

ful ; but girls never know when to stop, and to let you into a secret of my heart, I mean to take her *severely* to task, the first opportunity ; it is one thing to flirt in London with a younger son, or some guardsman, in order to bring a more desirable lover to the point, but in this horrid barbarian country, where every thing is taken *au pied de la lettre*, a girl gets committed in a moment, and talked over and commented on for half a year, and then the report gets next season to town, and she is blown upon, and really to have a girl of Adelaide's beauty and pretensions blown on for such a *parvenu* as that Blisset, is beyond endurance."

"But," said the persevering Miss O'Brian, "did not Lady Adelaide give him great encouragement ? I am sure I heard Lady Tallmash and Mrs. Claringham talking it over, and saying it was quite ridiculous to say there was 'nothing in it,' when he gave twenty guineas for a waistcoat, entirely to please Lady Adelaide, and that he neve left her for one moment at the ball ; and I overheard Lady Fitz-Gibbon tell her daughters that there was a tender scene in the passage between Sir Godfrey and Lady Adelaide, that she was squeezed up close to them, and could ~~not~~ help hearing, and there was a declaration ; but when they sat down to supper

she seemed flurried, and talked only to Lord Cocker-mouth to turn off observation.

“Distraction! exclaimed Lady Honiton,” don’t tell me one word more of the horrid Carlisle, and county gossip; I wonder people can be so impertinent as to make those observations on persons so much above them. I confess, as a man, Sir Godfrey is better than many of higher rank about town, he is well appointed—well dressed—and well mannered, and certainly has a very large fortune—but his name! Oh, heavens! Lady Adelaide Blisset! I should die of it, and no doubt he has quantities of vulgar relations, and to end in that! after all I have toiled and struggled for! it is—it must be *impossible!* Adelaide, with her high spirit and all her genuine aristocratical feelings, she never can have so committed herself!

“Don’t you think,” said Miss O’Brian, “the Duchess was inclined to help it on?”

“Why,” replied Lady Honiton, “I should have said so of any one else, but surely she must feel too strongly the advantages of her position ever to tempt any girl to degrade herself by a *mal alliance.*”

“I am much mistaken,” said her companion, “if she does not feel,—and feel heavily, all the misery of being

tied to a selfish wilful fool, though he is a Duke, who does not care more for her, than for one of his coach horses; only values her because she graces his establishment; if she had half a grain more of either sense or feeling, she would be wretched; but as it is, she is only tired to death of the dull state she lives in, and weary of him, and of herself too; I am sure she'll never help any one to do as her mother made her do; did you observe the fuss she made with Sir Godfrey?"

"Your observations have too much truth in them, and I shall, as I have already told you, have some serious conversation with Adelaide, and as I don't think Ottery likes this electioneering business, if Adelaide has been tolerably prudent, we can soon break through such a connexion; and indeed, if she has not, it is quite enough that her parents disapprove."

"Are you sure Lord Honiton would do so?"

"I don't know," replied Lady Honiton, "but at any rate it is a point on which I should try *my* strength; and generally on such occasions a mother's influence is the strongest."

This observation brought them to the door, and both separated to dress; Lady Honiton with head and heart full.

The dinner only consisted of a family party, and when the ladies left the table, after fortifying himself with a couple of glasses of London particular Maderia, Lord Honiton said to his son,

“Now we are alone, and at leisure, I should like to know, Frederic, what are the objections you have taken against the religion of your country, and in which you have been educated; and what has given you so favourable an opinion of that which your ancestors renounced.”

“I consider,” replied Lord Ottery, “that the Roman Catholic is the *true* church of Christ, and that the Reformed, or Protestant, which ever you please to call it, is only a *sectarian* church, it has given up the grand and fundamental tenets of the holy mother church.”

“In what respect do you particularly mean?” said Lord Honiton, “we consider ourselves as nearer the *true Apostolic Church*, because we have not incorporated the *traditions of men* with the *word of God*.”

“But were not those holy men,” returned Lord Ottery, “who handed down these traditions from the apostles?”

“No!” replied his father, “that I deny, some of

them might be pious, good men, and some far otherwise; who handed down as *tradition* whatever tended to aggrandize the power of the Roman church to which they belonged? and did not our Saviour caution his disciples not to receive the traditions of the Pharisees even as the law of Moses; much less as *his* Gospel?"

"But," said Lord Ottery, did not the traditions of the Church of Rome begin with St. Peter? and was not he appointed by Christ, himself?"

"He was," said Lord Honiton, "appointed to form *one* church; but beyond that, his appointment is somewhat doubtful. St. Paul was a chosen vessel, called to preach to the Gentiles, and might be put as a rival of St. Peter, I do not mean wholly to deny the pretensions of St. Peter, but his power was only *ecclesiastical*, how did his successor, the Pope, acquire his *temporal* power? from an usurper, *Pepin*, who conferred the Exarchate of Ravenna, on Pope Stephen, either as a bribe, or as a reward for crowning him Emperor of the Franks. What were the means of increasing this power? were *they* *holy*? and what was the *use* made of the power when gained? and by *whom*? a *weak*, *fallible*, and often a *vicious*, man; and yet he calls himself God's vicegerent on earth."

“And you forget that Christ twice gave the same charge collectively to the Apostles, that he gave individually to St. Peter, and that it related to the establishment of the Christian churches in general.”

“As the representative of Christ, as *his* vicar, the Pope is God’s vicegerent on earth,” said Lord Ottery, “and taking his title from St. Peter, ‘whomsoever he binds on earth shall be bound in heaven,’ and ‘whomsoever he loosens on earth, shall be loosened in heaven.’”

“And you think,” replied Lord Honiton, “that his holiness the Pope is *infallible*; that he is chosen by the influence of the Holy Ghost; pray let me ask you, Ottery, do you think a pure and holy spirit like the Spirit of God, such as we are taught to believe the Holy Ghost is, would have chosen Alexander Borgia as his vicegerent, a monster in crime and vice; nay, even Leo X. highly as he is extolled, was no pattern of apostolic virtues.”

This Lord Ottery could not deny, he only said, “they were fallible as men, but holy in their office, and like our king who ‘can do no wrong’ in his kingly character.”

“But, Frederic, don’t you consider virtue and morality essential to the christian character?”

“Man,” replied Lord Ottery, “is liable to err, and can only, when he has sinned, be restored to grace and favour by the church, in the persons of its head, and ministers, they must therefore have the power of absolving sins.”

“But suppose you wanted,” said Lord Honiton, “to ask pardon of a sovereign, who had expressly told you he was *ready* and willing to pardon those who asked *him*, and you had *his* permission to approach *his* throne, would you go first to his pages, then to his equerries, and so on through his household, and beg them to intercede for you? Would you not rather go to HIM yourself and make your request, and ask pardon? so do we;—we address God as our Creator, we implore the intercession of Christ as our Redeemer, and Mediator, and we desire the Holy Spirit as our Sanctifier. We want no Pope or Priest, how can they tell whether our repentance is sincere, and if our sins are pardoned?”

“Surely,” said Lord Ottery, “their judgment is better than our own, and to confess our sins is humiliating, and must make us ashamed of them!”

“Are we not,” said his father, “more likely to be ashamed of the sins of frail human nature, when we

confess them to a God, holy and pure, than when we confess them to our fellow men, many of them more sinful and vicious than ourselves."

"But," said Lord Ottery, "we can have no *absolution* from God, nothing to *comfort* us, nothing to *assure* us we are pardoned."

"And what," returned his father, "is the word of a man, of a Pope—or any of his clergy? Every man sees things through the medium of his own understanding and passions, and by them he judges others."

"That I deny," said Lord Ottery, "they have *infallible* rules of faith, by which they judge."

"By whom were their rules or articles of faith constructed?" said Lord Honiton. "By Pope Pius IV., who was as fallible, though perhaps not quite so vicious, as some of his predecessors."

"But," replied his son, "there is *comfort* and *security* in the Catholic faith, you have no idea of; you have, under that, *no doubts* whether your sins are pardoned, your pardon is signed and sealed by the vicar of Christ and his delegates."

"And so you think, Frederic," said his father, "it is better to be pardoned by *man* than by God. One perhaps is much the more easily obtained; God only par-

dons on repentance, contrition of heart, and amendment of life. But if, at the jubilee, you go a certain number of times to a certain number of churches, the Pope will grant you a pardon *for life* for all the sins *you have* or *may* commit—mighty easy conditions, truly!”

“I certainly feel,” said Lord Ottery, “there is great comfort in the security of pardon the Roman church gives; and another point of faith, that gives great consolation, is the prayers of good men, saints, and, above all, of the Virgin.”

“And what authority have you in scripture that the prayers of the Virgin avail any thing beyond that of any other pious woman; she was chosen as the mother of Christ for her *purity*, but her name occurs but *five* times in the New Testament, and then Christ never notices her as having any *spiritual* power; he recommends her kindly to the protection of his beloved disciple, and desires him to consider her as *his own* mother, not as one who was to be styled *Queen of Heaven*, and the Catholics even exalt her above Christ himself, by praying to her to use *her* influence with Him, surely this is delusion?”

“It is one of great comfort and consolation, and

one which a good catholic would not part with for the wealth of worlds. How poor ! how cold ! is your protestant faith and practice ! Your churches, generally speaking, are opened only once in a week. In any moment of anguish, grief, or disappointment, a catholic may go into a church, prostrate himself before the mother of God, and come away refreshed and comforted."

" But precarious comfort without security is but a slender reed. What has no warrant in scripture must be doubtful. I grant you the religion of the Church of Rome takes great hold on the imagination, but it neglects the understanding ; a large portion of mankind are more governed by the eye and ear, than by the mind, and I do not wonder it " takes silly women captive," and those who have never considered the subject. You talk of the Pope and his church deriving all their regulations from the apostles ; where do they find them ? not in the Gospels, or Epistles. From them *we* take the faith and practise of *our* church ; but if you look a little into paganism, you will find that oral confession, penance, and absolution, are all taken from the Druids, the worst of pagans ! "

Lord Ottery started at this assertion, but he was

not able to parry it; he only said, "I wish, my dear father, you would talk to some able catholic priest, I am sure you would find you have many erroneous opinions."

"I have no objection, Frederic, provided you will oblige me by doing the same with my good neighbour the Bishop of Carlisle."

"I am not learned enough to do so," said Lord Ottery, "but if you can prevail on the Bishop to hold a conversation on the subject with Father O'Leary, or any other learned catholic, it will greatly edify me."

"I will try," said Lord Honiton, "to procure this favour for you; but it always appears to me that one great objection to the catholic faith is the arrogant *security* it assumes, asserting that its votaries are *sure* of heaven. We protestants only *hope*, *humbly hope*, we shall, through the *merits of Christ*, be saved, and our errors, through the *mercy of God*, pardoned."

"Its security is its grand characteristic," said Lord Ottery, "it is better surely to believe too much, if it is too much, than *too little*."

"It is in our practise as well as belief we trust," said Lord Honiton, "to believe too much, and practise too little is the worst error; and the bigotry of supposing none can be saved out of the pale of their

church, appears to me very shocking." "We set no bounds to the infinite mercy of God, we hope we are right, and we hope our heavenly Father will be merciful to those who are in error; and to us, if we are so; but it seems so unchristianlike to consider one's neighbour in a state of perdition—I can never bring my mind to it."

"There can only," replied Lord Ottery, "be one road to life eternal; if protestants wander from it, it is at their own peril—so large a body of mankind have lived and died in the catholic faith, there is more reason to think the *many* are right, than the few."

"We are," said Lord Honiton, "forbid in scripture, 'to follow the multitude to do evil,' so that number is no proof of right; and the ignorance in which all catholics, excepting the priests, are kept, deprives them of the power of deciding for themselves between right and wrong. The book of knowledge, the *Word of God*, is a sealed book to them."

"Is it not safer," said Lord Ottery, "that a book with so many doubtful passages, should be withheld from a general perusal?"

"It was," replied Lord Honiton, "written for the whole world, wherever the gospel can be preached, and

from it the most ignorant may learn sufficient to make them 'wise unto salvation.' They may learn, first, God's dealings with his chosen people, the Jews; secondly, the promise of the Messiah handed down in a chain of prophecies from the beginning of the world; and the example of the prophets and patriarchs; then the incarnation of God in man, in the person of Christ; the redemption of mankind; Christ's resurrection, as a type of ours; his ascent into heaven, all the moral precepts of his gospel, beyond compare with any other code of morals; his instructions to his apostles, who were sent not individually to the church of Rome, but to preach the gospel throughout the whole world; they founded the seven churches of Asia: what made the Roman See superior to the church of Antioch or Cappadocia, only by being in a more civilized part of the world, it sooner acquired *temporal* form. But with the discipline of any particular church its members only have to do. Christians in general have a right to the gospel: Christ has left it for their benefit, and no self-styled vicar has a right to withhold it."

"I have heard very different arguments," returned Lord Ottery, "and felt them convincing, which I do not feel your's to be."

"You have," said Lord Honiton, "been used to hear one side uncontradicted, and advocated by persons who have been bred to polemic disputations. Our church, though it has able defenders, yet generally speaking, its ministers attend more to its *practical* duties, than to religious disputations."

"But they do them, not with half the zeal the Catholics do," said Lord Ottery.

"They have not, I grant you, the same proselyting zeal," said his father, "because they think no extra reward hereafter is annexed to making converts. If I lived fifty years close to a Catholic, I should not think it necessary to convert him, I should leave that to God and his own conscience: but he would, as he thinks, obtain a higher place in heaven for bringing me over to his creed, and I fear your long residence abroad, Frederic, has thrown you in the way of such persons."

"It has thrown me in the way," said Lord Ottery, "of many enlightened, and amiable men, whose opinions, I confess, have much weight with me."

"Well," said Lord Honiton, "we will keep our bargain, and in the mean time we will not let the subject, however momentous, be one of contention between us."

And here the discussion ended, though Lord Ottery was evidently thoughtful, silent and *distrain* the whole evening.

At breakfast the following morning, the post bag, as usual, was brought and opened ; Lady Louisa, who was sitting close to her father, saw the hand and seal of one letter, and instantly left the room.

“ I cannot imagine,” said Lady Honiton, “ what is the matter with Louisa, she is always fainting, or ready to faint, she did not use to be so delicate ; do, Clara, go and see what is the matter, I really must send for Dixon, and if he cannot understand what is the matter, we must have Dr. Probin from Carlisle.”

“ By all means, have any one you like,” said Lord Honiton, “ only don’t tease the dear girl with it, keep her quiet ; I think all she has gone through within the last week would have overset a stronger girl than Louisa.”

This considerate speech was repeated to her by her sister, and she felt most grateful for her father’s kind consideration.

Lord Honiton retired to his room to read his letters, and sent for Lady Louisa ; she came trembling and agitated, but he cheered her by saying,

“I have had a most kind and considerate letter from my old friend, General Clayton, and another from his nephew, you may see them both.”

The former expressed his happiness that his nephew had got the promotion he expected, at least he was going out to Malta to obtain it. He wished it was in his power to forward Colonel Neville's wishes in a tenderer point, more effectually than by giving him his interest, but that should be exerted to the utmost, and he had a solemn promise from the Minister, that the first vacant military government in India he should have, and that of Madras would certainly be so in a year; the present commandant was ill, and most anxious to return to Europe. But how far Lord Honiton and Lady Louisa would think that was equal to their wishes, he did not know; that rested with them.

Colonel Neville only recapitulated his uncle's kindness to the same point, but felt he dare not, under such circumstances, hope to be accepted. He was wretched, and implored Lord Honiton that as he was setting off for Portsmouth he might find one line at Plymouth, as he passed; that suspense was misery beyond endurance, and if Lord Honiton was unpropitious, he should exchange for foreign active service; though,

under happier circumstances, an absence of six months was all that would be required of him; but he could not return to England a disappointed man.

Lord Honiton smiled at the impetuosity and despair of a young man in love, but told Lady Louisa she might take till the next day seriously to consider the matter, and give him her answer, exhorting her to weigh well, if she could give up her country and her friends for ten years.

As the deliberations of a young lady in favour of a highly-prized lover are not very dispassionate, Lord Honiton pointed out to his daughter that she would have to encounter the disadvantages of an unhealthy climate, a long voyage; and, after ten years of sub-regal state, return to a much more moderate income at home.

But it was, she felt, with the man she loved, and had loved long before she was aware of it; and of whose worth, and in whose honour, she had the highest confidence! She had seen the false and hollow world of fashion, she had hated and despised its want of principle, and its want of all but *selfish* feeling, and had long resolved against the *interested* and generally *wretched*

matches made by establishment-hunting mothers, and daughters.

She therefore, at the end of the given time, informed her kind father of her determination to accept Colonel Neville.

He wrote accordingly to him, and allowed his daughter to add a line.

When the apothecary arrived, Lady Louisa, whose mind was calmed, and her suspense removed, seemed to need no medical advice ; but Lady Honiton insisted on Lord Ottery's seeing him, and to him he gave some alarming injunctions as to diet, and *care*, all which, it was evident to every eye his patient wanted.

After his interview with his daughter, Lord Honiton went to his lady's dressing-room, and communicated to her what he had done respecting Lady Louisa ; her mortification was great, but as there were other subjects of deep, and even more exciting interest, she bore this tolerably well—smoothed her brow, and said,

“ You cannot, my dear lord, call this a good, a very eligible match for a daughter of our's.”

“ Indeed I do,” replied he, “ I weigh the man, and a better I could not find in the wide world ; and with his uncle's interest, which ought to be great, and his

own merit, he cannot fail of rising to the top of his profession. The promised situation in India leads to every thing, and without that, or one as good, I should not have allowed Louisa to think of marrying him, but it is beyond many more high sounding things in this country."

Lady Honiton, whose ideas, when her own family were concerned, took the superlative degree, immediately thought of all the splendour she had heard Colonel Blackburn describe as belonging to the lady of the Governor-General of India, and her considerate lord did not undeceive her.

At dinner, Miss O'Brian said, "I am sure, Lord Ottery, Dixon need not have prescribed abstinence to you; I wish I could fast as you do, and yet you get no credit for it."

Lord Ottery coloured and laughed, but it was forced.

Ap[ro]pos to nothing, said Lady Honiton, "I am glad to tell you, Juliet O'Brian, that General Clayton will be with us in a fortnight."

Miss O'Brian now coloured in her turn, and Lord Ottery, determined to have his revenge, said, "Really Miss O'Brian, I do believe the General was an old

lover of your's, I am sure, I wish he saw your joy at his coming."

Miss O'Brian quite angry, declared she hardly knew General Clayton.

"Well then," said Lord Honiton, "you have a pleasure to come, and I drink to your better acquaintance."

Lady Honiton's feelings on the occasion were far from agreeable, she knew the hopes she had raised, and she feared they were at once overturned.

But whilst the party at Inglewood was confined to the family party, nothing very interesting took place. Lady Honiton tried what she could do with Lady Adelaide on the subject of Sir Godfrey Blisset, but she declared it was mere flirtation, and asserted her right to *flirt* with whom she pleased

Finding her daughter impracticable, and lulling her own fears of Sir Godfrey Blisset, by Lady Adelaide's assurance, Lady Honiton turned her thoughts to her son's health, and endeavoured to reconcile her mind to Lady Louisa's match, and whilst we leave her to disbelieve one, and to ameliorate the other, we must introduce our readers to new scenes, to do so we must go back for at least three years.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN the northern part of Somersetshire stands the Castle of Dunster, originally built by Sir William De Mohun, the representative of an ancient family of Normandy, who followed the fortunes of the Conqueror.

This domain belonged, at the period of our story, to a descendant of the founder, who bore the title of Earl of Dunster and Abberville.

The building had long been falling into decay, when the father of the present possessor did much to restore it to a habitable state, and what he left undone, was completed by his son. One entire side, flanked by two handsome towers, formed a spacious residence, there was a third, and distant tower, connected by a passage converted into out offices, the rest had fallen,

or been taken down. It was situated on a very high mound, almost a hill, commanding a beautiful prospect; in front was the Bristol Channel, in clear weather bounded by the fleecy hills of Glamorganshire; to the right was the mouth of the Parret, with the Islands Flathomes, and Steepholmes, between the shores of the Channel, and the coast of Glamorgan.

The hill on which the castle stood was watered at its base by a small river, which in feudal times had served the purpose of a moat, but was now a beautiful clear trout stream; near the castle was the of ruins a priory of Benedictine monks, built by the same Sir William de Mohun, and a small and insignificant town of the same name with the castle, was situated behind it. But the important place of supply was Minehead, a borough town about four miles off.

In the year 1825, one delicious evening in July, Lord Dunster and his sister, Lady Gertrude Mohun, were placed opposite a window, commanding the prospect we have just described, with the beautiful knoll on which the castle stood, clothed with the finest trees, and the windows of the room opening on a terrace the whole length of that side of the building. Lord Dunster, a great invalid, or rather valetudinarian, was reclining

on a couch, and his sister was preparing his coffee, which, placing on a little table before him, he said,

“ I thank you, I believe I have the best and kindest of sisters ! ”

“ You ought,” she replied, “ for you have been the most affectionate of brothers.”

He took her hand tenderly, and with rather a tremulous voice said, “ I am going to tax this kindness to its greatest extent ! ”

“ To any extent in my power,” replied Lady Gertrude, and as she said this a tear from Lord Dunster’s eye dropped on her glove.

She returned to the table where she was making the coffee, when, after a pause, he said,

“ I am expecting a ward of mine from abroad, she has been committed to my care by a dear and valued friend, and I would ask of my dear sister protection for her ; for I am a poor helpless invalid, and she ought to be brought properly out into the world, for she is of high rank, and will be a great heiress ; but she has considerable disadvantages by being a foreigner,” and, after a pause, he added, “ *a Catholic.*”

Lady Gertrude made the excuse of replenishing her brother’s cup, to approach him, and taking his hand

between her's, with her good-natured benevolent eyes glistening, she assured him, "all in her power she would do for his protégée." but added, "you know I am a recluse, and not fit to bring out a young person such as you describe."

After a long silence, as Lord Dunster seemed lost in thought, Lady Gertrude took her usual evening walk on the terrace, to which she stepped by an open window.

That some unusual visitors, or rather inmates, were expected at the castle she knew from her maid, as a wing of the building once allotted to her, when young as a nursery, had been carefully and expensively fitted up; but no one could guess for *whom*, though abundant were the random guesses of the household.

Lady Gertrude had implicit confidence in her brother; she knew his honour and integrity, and she therefore determined to give way to no conjecture, time would show *who* this person was—the like forbearance had not been practised in the lower departments of the establishment.

Lord Dunster, from a diseased body, and a still more diseased mind, had lived much abroad, and particularly in Germany; and at a time when the works

of Voltaire and Rosseau were much in fashion. Under this school his early religious impressions had given way, and those who have no firm trust in the Almighty government of the world, or the hopes it affords, have nothing to support them under the calamities incident to human life. Such was Lord Dunster: he was amiable in his temper, and an object of pity, more than of censure; for he had lived in "evil times, and amongst evil men." He now resided chiefly at Dunster Castle, and as was likely from his temperament, associated little with his neighbours. But there was one, Sir William Davenport, endeared to him by those ties that are formed in youth. *He* occasionally paid Lord Dunster a visit, he had once been an admirer of Lady Gertrude's, though rudely and proudly rejected by her father; he had soon after married, and happily, and had a grown up family; yet a little remnant of old sentiment made him like to make his visit when she was at the Castle, and a few days previous to that we have just alluded to, Sir William Davenport arrived by appointment to dinner. Lady Gertrude left the dessert rather earlier than usual, and walked to a distant lodge in the park, to see an old pensioner of her's.

But in the housekeeper's room there were symptoms

of preparation. Mrs. Bartlet, the presiding deity, had brought out her best china, and she, and her still-room maid, were waiting for some guests, when Perkins the butler, and Sir William Davenport's man Saunders, entered.

"Well," cried Mrs. Bartlet, "I thought Mr. Saunders, that you and Perkins intended to sit all night over your bottle, and that *you* had quite forgot an old friend; I have been waiting tea for you this half hour, haven't I, Lucy?"

"Really, ma'am," said the polite Mr. Saunders, "my friend Perkins is the guilty person, we have been talking over old times, and over such a capital bottle of old Port, there was no leaving it unfinished."

"Give me," said Perkins, "fresh tea and fresh wine! I hate stale and flat things!"

"I know that," said Mrs. Bartlet, "but then you should consider other people, who like their cup of tea, and have nothing to do with Port wine; come, Lucy, child, does the kettle boil? I always put in a little hyson with my souchong, and hope you like it, Mr. Saunders."

"Oh, we all know you make excellent tea, Mrs. Bartlet," said the butler, "only let us have it, for I

expect my lord's bell every moment for his coffee, and I like what his lordship calls the 'roma of tea,' no filling up for me."

During this dissertation on the China herb, Perkins was cooling his tea by pouring it from the cup to the saucer, and back again. In reply to Mrs. Bartlet's question to his *convive*, "is your tea agreeable?"

He replied, "excellent, ma'am, as all your handy works are, but pray what news have you on your side the country?"

"Oh, don't ask us for news, we are the dullest people in the world, we should rather apply to you, who go so much about."

"To be sure, we do go a little about, but the good people of Minehead are strangely mistaken, if there is not some great event in agitation in this house, some say a wedding."

"O lord! O lord!" exclaimed Mrs. Bartlet, "there is no marrying, or giving in marriage, here, is there Lucy? child, take care, you are pouring too much hot water into the tea-pot."

"No wonder, ma'am, when you talk on such an interesting subject," replied Mr. Saunders, "but yet the world—our little world, says you are going to have a new

lady—that my lord is tired of solitude, and is preparing for one. I am sure we have heard nothing for this month past but complaints from our housekeeper, because Simpson's waggon was always filled with furniture, books, and musicals, for my lord ; so that's positive evidence."

"Why, to be sure," said Mrs. Bartlet, cautiously, "there has been some finishing and fitting up."

"And who is to be the new Countess?"

"Really," returned the housekeeper, "that is more than I can tell, and that she is to be the Countess, is more than I can guess."

"Bless me, Mrs. Bartlett, you don't mean to insinuate you are expecting an *improper* lady?"

"God forbid, sir!" replied Mrs. Bartlet indignantly, and colouring "I wonder how you could suppose *I* should think of staying a moment under such circumstances ; indeed, my lord is much too good to have such an idea, not that *I* should very much like a young countess, I who have been, as I may say, for almost twenty years mistress here, I should not like to be hectored with the whims of any young lady."

As she was finishing this speech, the bell rang, and Perkins left his tea, saying, "Pray let me have a ca-

pital dish when I come back, none of your wishy washy's."

"But," said Saunders as the butler shut the door, "you must guess who is coming, don't be shy with an old friend."

"Why," said Mrs. Bartlet, "Perkins will have it that it must be a daughter of Fanny Harland's; but I say no no, a daughter of poor Fanny's would be much more likely to come here in Lucy's place, if she get a better or a good husband: my Lord would never get pianos, harps, dulcimers, and all sorts of music for the like of her, poor thing! if there is one of them alive, for really one of the mayor's shopmen was twice to town about the chintz furniture, and the books were changed three times because my Lord did not like the binding, such a fuss for a daughter of poor Faunny's would be quite preposterous."

"But who may this Fanny Harland be?" said the sapient valet.

"Why, don't you know? Lord love you, Mr. Saunders, though perhaps she was off before you came into these parts; let me see, it must be more than eighteen years ago."

"I have only been fourteen years with Sir William," replied Saunders.

“ Well, then I will tell you ; you must know, that when poor Lady Caroline died,” and here the good housekeeper fetched a deep sigh, and wiped away a small tear. “ My Lady,” for the late Countess was then alive, “ Lady Gertude, as is now here, and who ought by right to have been *your* lady, but my lord was too proud to stoop to a *Baronight*, wanted somebody to cheer her after the loss of her sister, my Lady, as I was saying, sent for Fanny Harland, who was a sort of relation of her own, to bear her company, and a nice pretty lively girl she was, and Lady Gertrude was doatingly fond of her ; she had not been here long, and I always misgave me that she did not like the dulness and retirement ; when nothing would serve her but she would marry an officer man, quartered at Minehead. I never will believe but she must have known him before she came here, when she was a boarder at some school near London ; for how could she know enough of him to fall in love with him, by just passing him in the road when he went to Dunster, to see some of his soldiers : those girls at the London schools can get into a deal of mischief, and all girls have strange fancies ; but not to be tedious. My Lady did all she could to stop it, but she had no natural

authority over Fanny, and as for Lady Gertrude, I have, with my own eyes, seen her on her knees begging her not to do so imprudent a thing, but nothing would do against this fierce man with a red coat and a sword by his side, so to make short of a long story : one morning the regiment was to march, and Miss Fanny marched out at the window and was married at Minehead church, where she had been out-asked, and was off with her spark. My Lady and Lady Gertrude were very angry at first ; but, good creatures, they relented, and though they never saw her afterwards, when they found she was going to the Indies, they sent her money, and all sorts of things ; but she never came back, she died there, leaving some children."

"And," said Perkins, who had just then swallowed down his tea, "who else can it be, but one of those girls, that my lord is going to have to play music, and read plays to divert him?"

"That I shall never believe till I see it," said the housekeeper.

"However," replied Perkins, "don't stay argumenting this, but get my lord's coffee and muffin."

"Bless me Lucy, be quick child, here is the coffee, just toast the muffin, mind you don't overdo it. Ano-

ther cup of tea Mr. Saunders, there is very good in the tea-pot, I put a little fresh tea in before I filled it up—dear me ! I am quite sorry I did not offer you one of my lord's muffins, but Lucy, butter that you are toasting for Mr. Saunders, give me another for my lord, I will do this myself, they are made from a particular receipt, I assure you, sir ; and I really believe his lordship would know if they were touched by any other hands than mine. Poor gentleman, he lives so like a monk, I am glad I can make anything he will eat."

" And Fauchon is always ready for Mrs. Bartlet's muffins if my lord is not," said Perkins, " I don't know if she has so nice a taste about fingers, for she generally eats up the whole plate, and finds no fault ! "

" Well ! well !" said the housekeeper, " all is ready now, though I fear Lady Gertrude is not come in, I know she is gone to Dame Timpin's, and her long stories keep anybody an hour. I hope, Mr. Saunders, we shall have a comfortable rubber at whisk, by and bye, when Mrs. Jennings comes in, but she is gone to Minehead, and I dare say will take a cup of tea with Mrs. Wilson ; I am sure, I wonder she is so fond of Mrs. Wilson, considering how little respect she shows *me*, I don't think she asks *me* to tea, or comes here twice in a

year; but then perhaps she learns some new fashions from Mrs. Jennings, though to my mind she is but a dowdy as well as her Lady, who, good soul, cares not what she wears." Another bell broke up this party.

It was some days after Sir William Davenport's visit, that the conversation we have related some pages back took place between Lord Dunster and his sister over their coffee. She took her usual evening walk, but she restrained herself from giving way to any conjecture respecting the expected guest; "my brother," she said to herself, "will tell me all that is requisite for me to know; if there is any mystery, I will neither for his sake, nor my own, endeavour to unravel it; I know he will ask nothing of me I ought not to consent to, nor introduce any one to my protection, to whom I should not accord it."

Lady Gerturde returned from her walk, made the tea, when an arrival was announced: it was a German barouche, much more like a waggon than the light vehicles to which we give that name, it was covered with luggage and dust, it had three ladies within side the carriage, a homely person, and a courier on the box.

Lord Dunster was excessively agitated on being told the party was come; but a little thing agitated

him, and before they entered the room he had risen from his sofa, and rallied his spirits.

The first of the party that entered was a young lady about seventeen, of a dark, clear, but rather olive complexion, and might have been guessed to be a Spaniard ; her features were regular and pleasing, her eyes bright and intelligent, and she had a remarkably pleasing and intelligent smile, though the general cast of her countenance was rather serious, bordering on melancholy. She had on a close travelling dress of fine Saxon blue cloth, covering her up to the throat, and a collar like some of Vandyke's pictures turned over it, her sleeves were large and loose, like those worn by nuns, though not very unlike the present Parisian fashion. A black beaver hat, like the Flemish hats in pictures by Rubens, and some black feathers almost shading her face, and a massive gold chain and cross, hanging round her neck.

Lord Dunster approached to receive her, she bent her knee, closed her hands as nuns sometimes do before a shrine, he raised her, kissed her forehead, presented her to his sister, and led her to a seat.

She was followed by one who might have acted Juliet's nurse, her dress was dark and coarse, her feet

in shoes made to the foot without compressing, like what some of the North American Indians make of the skin of a beast just killed, and fitted to their foot. Her dress was shabby, it looked like the costume of some convent, by its make and texture, she had no veil, only a white neckerchief, and a large gold cross on her bosom. She was followed by a shabby looking priest, but with a very decided and consequential air.

Lord Dunster introduced the young lady to his sister as Comtesse Rosenberg, the other lady as *la sœur* Clementine, and the man as Abbé Françoise Meynel.

Tea was offered but declined, the young lady only begged to have some *eau sucré*; her companions made no objection to a more substantial supper, which was prepared for them in another room.

When they were gone to partake of it, Lord Dunster asked his sister to conduct Comtesse Rosenberg to her apartment, saying,

“It is one you used to occupy in your childhood, you will know the way;” before taking leave of her for the night, Lord Dunster told his guest, “That she was entire mistress of the apartment she was going to take

possession of, no one would intrude on her, but he hoped the friendship Lady Gertrude would cultivate with her, would induce her often to join them in the drawing room, but it would be at her own pleasure, and if there was any thing she wished to have added to her rooms, or her library, her utmost wish would be complied with."

She took a graceful leave of her kind host, and when Lady Gertrude returned from doing the honours of her old nursery, which she hardly knew again, now all rosewood and celestial blue, Lord Dunster said,

"This is a sad care with my health, but I could not avoid it, and I trust it may not be a long one."

Lady Gertrude asked no questions, and the next day only paid a short visit to the young Comtesse, who excused herself from coming down to Lord Dunster's dinner, as her maid was too ill to dress her, but she took a walk in the shrubbery and flower garden with Lady Gertrude ; all was new to her, and her remarks were *naïve* but judicious, and bespoke a well-informed mind.

END OF VOL. II.

